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ABSTRACT

This issue of "The Community College Humanities Review" contains a series of articles, reviews, and reports addressing various issues related to values education and other areas of the humanities. The issue contains: "The Study of History and the Question of Human Values," by Abraham Ascher; "A Moral Imperative for Teaching Values in a Literature Class," by Lesta C. Wren; "Teaching Writing and Teaching Virtue," by Eugene Garver; "Humanistic Ideals and the Professions," by Arthur Grugan; and "Pitfalls and Proposals in the Teaching of Values," by Norman E. Bowie. In addition, the following essay reviews are presented: "Involvement in a Legacy: A Challenge and an Opportunity for America's Community Colleges," by James F. Perry; and "Canon, Curriculum, and Cultural Literacy," by Linda Spoerl. Finally, three reports are included: "Value, Freedom, and Transformation: Some Reflections on the Teaching of Philosophy at LaGuardia Community College," by Neil Rossman; "Harmonizing the Humanities with Business Studies: The Language and International Trade Program at Eastern Michigan University," by Ray Schaub; and "Rethinking the Introductory History Course," by David Berry and Steve Curry. (HB)

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THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
HUMANITIES REVIEW

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David Berry and Steve Curry — Rethinking the Introductory History Course

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The Study of History and the Question of Human Values

Abraham Ascher

For some time now teachers of history have been on the defensive. Their discipline, which used to occupy a central place in the curricula of schools and colleges, has come under attack from many groups of educators as "irrelevant," a subject that does not impart practical knowledge. Academic historians not only deny the charge but claim that the study of history is important because it helps us to clarify our moral and spiritual values. There is much to be said for the historians' claim, but it must nevertheless be conceded that the proponents of history face serious problems in making their case.

For one thing, history can be dull and teachers of the subject often bore their students. Too frequently, the emphasis in the classroom is on a mere recital of facts and dates, and the drama of great events is lost. More and more historians write longer and longer books on ever smaller subjects. A five-hundred page book on the construction of bridges during the Middle Ages is not likely to hold the attention of many readers.

Nor can it be easily demonstrated that the study of history will automatically yield moral values that are universally acceptable. No matter how much we study the past, we will not necessarily become better human beings. We will not necessarily come to place a high premium on such values as decency, honesty, originality, peace, rule of law, or any other ideal that all or most citizens in our society may cherish. Indeed, sometimes it seems that the study of history, which involves reading about the most monstrous of crimes, transforms us into cynics, makes us despair about the demonstrated ability of human beings to commit evil.

Nor does the study of history enable us to draw lessons about man's behavior. History is not a science in the sense that chemistry and physics are sciences, and the study of history will not make it possible for us to predict the

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future. History involves masses of human beings about whom no causal laws of general application can be formulated. For example, starvation may lead people to revolution but it may also lead them to submission or apathy. Prosperity may be conducive to the arts or it may not. Indeed, it is difficult and often impossible to discover cause and effect relationships. We may find it possible to describe a chain of events or general conditions without being able to draw definitive conclusions about the cause of a specific occurrence. For every cause is in itself an effect of some other prior cause, and the historian seeking to explain one occurrence may face an indefinite regression. A good case in point would be the cause of World War I. Was it the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo? Was the cause imperialism? Was it the arms race? Was it the economic rivalries? Was it the series of secret alliances? Was it nationalism? Clearly, we cannot arbitrarily rule out one or another factor.

There can be no laws of human conduct for the simple reason that human beings are not robots who react to processes beyond their control. They are cultural creatures of infinite complexity whose reactions to specific events cannot be foretold with scientific certitude. Thus, no historian can predict under what conditions war between nations will break out. If historians are bold enough to formulate a hypothesis about the origins of war, they obviously cannot test their theory by artificially creating the preconditions for military conflict.

Nor can we ignore the importance of chance events. The death of the relatively young Frederick III (at age 57) in 1888 from cancer profoundly affected the course of German history. He believed in representative government and was a moderate in politics, especially in international affairs. Had he lived longer — he was Emperor for only three months — the German Empire might well have been spared the irrational policies of William II, which greatly contributed to a heightening of tensions among the great powers.

Nevertheless, history is worth studying, in large measure precisely because its methodology, as that of all the humanities, is different from that of the natural sciences. There are many vital decisions that human beings in our society must make without being certain of the consequences. They often make moral judgments on a wide range of issues, they vote for candidates for office, they decide on their careers, and they are likely to make large purchases. In all these matters they are influenced by their experience, informed opinion, assessment of evidence — in short, by wisdom. The application of wisdom does not, of course, guarantee that the right decision will be reached, but would anyone argue that it would be better for human beings to abjure wisdom?

There is, then, a good practical reason for offering history in our schools and colleges: it is a discipline that provides students with data and perspectives

for judgments on contemporary issues. Is it sensible, for example, to favor one set of proposals against another for the improvement of race relations in this country without an awareness of the sources of racial conflict? Would it be wise to advocate the abolition of the electoral college for the selection of the president of the United States without understanding why that system was established by the Founding Fathers and how it has functioned for over two hundred years? Merely to raise these questions is to answer them.

The critical point is that history possesses certain virtues that are absent from other disciplines devoted to the study of man and society. History deals with the development of human societies chronologically, an approach that helps to make us aware, on the one hand, of the inevitability of change, and, on the other, of the gradualness of change. For youngsters who are often dismayed by the imperfections of our society, and there are many, this in itself is a useful lesson to learn. Moreover, unlike the social sciences or the other humanities disciplines, which tend to focus on one major aspect of a culture, history seeks to shed light on an entire culture and the interrelationships between its various aspects.

But it would be a mistake to rest the case for history merely on utilitarian arguments. It is a subject that can be enormously exciting. It can be exhilarating to read about the achievements and failures, the great discoveries and follies, of human beings. For whatever reason, human beings have always been interested in their "roots," in the developments — political, military, economic, and cultural — that have shaped the world in which they live. With the steady increase in leisure time, adults have at least the possibility of reading more than in the past. It therefore seems altogether appropriate for all our schools and colleges to train youngsters to read history thoughtfully and critically. We consider it proper for schools and colleges to teach literature and music, neither of which is "practical" in the narrow sense of the word. Why not history?

But the question still remains: will a person who studies history be imbued with any specific human values? By and large, that question is addressed by scholars and educators in rather general terms, as was demonstrated anew early last year at a conference of French historians and in a statement by the Secretary of Education in Great Britain, Sir Keith Joseph. According to the panel of French historians who met in Montpellier late in April 1984, "history in France is not just another subject taught in the schools; it is also a form of civics, a means of inculcating values."[1] A couple of months before that conference, Sir Keith Joseph spoke of the value of history in similar terms: "One of the aims of studying history," he said, "is to understand the development of shared values which are a distinctive feature of British society and culture and which continue to shape private attitudes and public policy." "In short," he continued, "history, properly taught, justifies its place in the school curriculum by what it does to

prepare all pupils for the responsibilities of citizenship as well as the demands of employment and the opportunities of leisure." Not to put too fine a point to it, history's function, according to Joseph, is to "build citizens."[2]

Now it would be naive to deny that many works of history have been tendentious and have served the purpose of indoctrinating readers with the jingoistic values of patriotism or with other values that a particular historian cherishes. This is particularly true in totalitarian societies, where history is used almost exclusively to indoctrinate the population with the "right values and right attitudes." But to some extent it has been true in all societies. In my view, this is an ill-conceived notion of the purpose of the study of history. For one thing, it is not easy to decide, at least in a pluralistic society, what kind of citizens we want our youngsters to become. "Should we form a French citizen?," asked one of the participants at the conference in Montpellier. "Or a European citizen? Or a citizen of the world? And how, in the current climate where 'imperialism' is one of the worst epithets, do you teach about the French Empire?"[3] And even if historians were to agree on what kind of citizens they consider to be ideal, there is no guarantee that they would succeed in persuading their public to subscribe to those values they themselves cherish.

To be sure, a great work such as W. E. H. Lecky's history of Ireland may have evoked sympathy and shame among English readers and influenced their political views because it contained detailed descriptions of terrible massacres. It is also true that readers of Plutarch and other ancient historians may be inspired by the ideals of liberty and civic virtue. Quite possibly, the reading of history can provide us with private ideals:

> One may aspire to the best characteristics of a man of Athens or a citizen of Rome: a Churchman of the twelfth century, or a Reformer of the sixteenth; a Cavalier of the old school, or a Puritan of the Independent Party; a Radical of the time of Castelreagh, or a public servant of the time of Peel. Still more are the individual great men the model and inspiration of the smaller . . . . This presentation of ideals and heroes from other ages is perhaps the most important among the educative functions of history.[4]

But the case for history cannot rest on this line of argument alone. The history of no society or civilization is so unambiguous as to allow only one lesson to be drawn from it. It is not inconceivable that readers of the history of ancient Athens might draw the conclusion that the institution of slavery is conducive to, or even necessary for, cultural creativity by those strata of the population who retain freedom. In short, people may find in history confirmation or support for their biases, be they racial or cultural or political. Just recall the "lessons" from history that were put forth by supporters and opponents of our involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s. The supporters endlessly cited the failure of

appeasement at Munich in 1938 and the opponents referred to the frequent failures of foreign intervention, most notably by the Allies in Russia in 1918. It seems to me futile and probably harmful to look to history for very specific and well-defined human values that we would all consider to be admirable and worthy of being preserved.

And yet, it can be argued that the imaginative study of history is likely to lead to one important conclusion about human beings that implies a very basic value, one that is not so narrow as to apply only to citizens of any one country, race, or culture. Nor is it a human value that would require the student of history to reach any one particular conclusion about an event, a social or political movement, or an institution. I have in mind the notion that human beings possess free will, that they have the ability to influence the course of events, that they themselves help shape their own destinies. This may seem to be an obvious point, but it is one that is very often forgotten or neglected by writers and teachers of history. One need only examine works of history, and particularly textbooks, to discover how frequently descriptions of great events or the evolution of societies are presented in such a manner as to suggest that only one course of development was possible. This is true not only of histories written by Marxists, who explicitly subscribe to a deterministic view of the historical process, but of historians in general, who tend not to pay enough attention to the "might have beens" in history. And in my view a consideration of the "might have been" is critical for an understanding of the historical process, because such an approach yields the deepest insights into that process. It also confirms what I believe to be man's greatest attribute, free will.

I know of no work that makes this point more cogently than a brief essay published in 1980 by H. R. Trevor-Roper entitled *History and Imagination*. Trevor-Roper argues that a primary function of the historian is to examine events within the context of what might have happened. That is to say, the historian, in analyzing any particular event, must ask himself whether there existed any realistic alternatives to what actually happened. And to do that intelligently he must use his imagination; hence the title of the essay.

Of course, some historical speculations are useless or absurd. Historians must limit themselves to plausible alternatives, they must avoid far-fetched possibilities that no one can accept as realistic. But a historian who does not consider alternatives cannot adequately explain what happened and why: "It is only if we place ourselves before the alternatives of the past, as of the present, only if we live for a moment, as the men of the time lived, in its still fluid context among its still unresolved problems, if we see those problems coming upon us, as well as look back on them after they have gone away, that we can draw useful lessons from history."[5] This sort of mental immersion in the past is extremely

difficult, but there is no other way of comprehending the past. There is no other way of making sense of a civilization radically different from ours.

A brief discussion of a few major events will make it clear why a mental immersion in the past is so critical for a proper understanding of history. We all know that revolutions have taken place on numerous occasions in different countries and in different eras. But unless we compare them to "revolutions" that did not happen at times when similar forces and circumstances existed, we cannot explain why they ever broke out. Thus, one question that may legitimately be raised is whether England in the early seventeenth century could not have avoided revolution. "Could not a wiser king than either of them [Charles I and James II] have preserved or restored an authoritarian monarchy in England, as was done in so many European countries?" We also know that revolutions have broken out at times when thoughtful individuals believed that prudent measures could have been taken to prevent them. "If contemporaries thought that they could [be prevented], why should we rule it out?"[6]

The Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 in Russia is a classic example of an event that cannot be considered to have been inevitable. If the Germans had not allowed Lenin to cross their country into Russia, the history of 1917 would have taken an entirely different turn. No other Bolshevik in Petrograd at the time possessed the vision, authority, and determination of Lenin. There would have been great turbulence in Russia even without Lenin, but it is extremely unlikely that his party would have come to power. The history of the twentieth century would have been fundamentally different from what it came to be. And this is not idle speculation. On the contrary, it is essential speculation if we are to understand a course of events that arguably has had greater impact on our century than any other.

Consider, also, the outcome of the Second World War. By all rational criteria, Hitler by 1940 had won the war in the West. Great Britain's refusal to accept defeat seemed to make no sense at all. The country teetered on the verge of collapse, and if Britain had surrendered there can be little doubt that Hitler would have crushed the Soviet Union and achieved his goal of world conquest. Even with Britain's perseverance he almost succeeded in defeating the Soviet Union. "'All that Lenin and we have sought to build is now lost!' exclaimed Stalin as he evacuated his government from a Moscow that seemed doomed to fall before that first shattering invasion."[7] Here again the critical role was played by one man, Winston Churchill, who single-handedly rallied an entire nation to do battle against Germany. He succeeded in uniting all parties and the people in what appeared to many to be a futile effort, a lost cause. Anyone who doubts Churchill's achievements should read some accounts of Britain in 1940, Churchill's speeches, and studies of how the British people responded to his calls for resistance to Nazi tyranny. It is hard to believe that anyone who reads

these works would not conclude that one person can decisively influence historical developments. Nor would they fail to realize that an appeal to fight for a moral cause — and, to a very large extent, the struggle against Nazism was just that — can stir masses of people into superhuman efforts.

What I am suggesting is that the study of history, although it may not be a source for specific values, can arouse respect and admiration for what I believe is the greatest of all human values: the freedom of the individual to help shape our destinies as well as his or her own destiny. But this will happen only if history is read thoughtfully and if it is taught critically and intelligently.

Classroom discussions and frequent writing assignments should concentrate not only on how a course of events evolved but on why it evolved as it did. Students are capable of understanding that to a considerable degree the historical process is determined by human beings who are constantly faced with the need to choose between alternative actions or policies. Thus, in discussing the origins of the American Civil War the surest way to bore students is to list four or five causes and then take up one by one the various sources of conflict between the North and South. A much more provocative and interesting way to proceed is to begin by asking the class what were President Lincoln's options in 1861 in response to the southern states' decision to secede from the Union. Why did he act as he did? Would any other course have been sensible, plausible? Skillfully handled, such a discussion would quickly require the consideration of a large body of historical data and would make students aware of the interconnection between events. But teachers are likely to conduct a history class in this manner only if they are well versed in the subject and if they are accustomed to think historically in the way I have suggested. Teachers might be surprised to discover how many students, challenged to think analytically and treated as young adults, would rise to the occasion.

The selection of appropriate reading material is, of course, critical. Many of our textbooks in history are indeed dull and condescending to youngsters because they simplify historical accounts to the point of utter lifelessness. But interesting textbooks as well as more specialized works of history are available for use in high school and college courses. There is no reason why students should not be assigned historical fiction or some primary sources, such as major speeches by statesmen or important governmental documents. An ideal assignment for the lesson on the Civil War would be Lincoln's inaugural address in March 1861, in which he analyzed the question of secession in masterly fashion. It is a document, moreover, that encourages the reader to consider the alternatives Lincoln himself faced in that fateful year.

One of the most compelling arguments for the study of history in the manner I have suggested was offered by the great humanist of the Renaissance,

Pico della Mirandola, in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man* — though, of course, making that argument was not his intention. Pico constructed an imaginary address by God to Adam, which, in my view, captures the essential nature of human beings and touches on the most important human value that a reader of history can extrapolate from the study of that subject:

> I have given thee neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgment, thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other things is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by me: thou, coerced by no necessity, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand I have placed thee. I have set thee at the world's center, that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. I have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal so that thou mayest with greater freedom of choice and with more honor, as though the maker and moulder of thyself, fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms of life, which are divine.

Man was "born to this condition," according to Pico, so that "we may understand that we may become that which we will to be."[8] Now it may be that students who grasp the significance of Pico's point will not be better citizens and will not acquire admirable human values. But I am sure that they will be more thoughtful people and will have a better appreciation of the human condition than they would otherwise have. As teachers of history or of the humanities in general, that is all we can hope for.

Notes

[1]*New York Times*, April 24, 1984.

[2]*The Times Educational Supplement*, London, February 17, 1984.

[3]*New York Times*, April 24, 1984.

[4]George M. Trevelyan, "Clio, A Muse," reprinted in Fritz Stern, ed., *The Varieties of History* (New York, 1956), p. 236.

[5]H. R. Trevor-Roper, *History and Imagination* (Oxford, 1980), p. 16.

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 14.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 7.

[8]Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, "Oration on the Dignity of Man," reprinted in Justus Buchler *et al*, eds., *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West* (New York, 1954), I, 536-538.

A "Moral Imperative" for Teaching Values in a Literature Class

Lesta C. Wren

Alexander Solzhenitsyn's book *Warning to the West* (1976) provides a good starting point for the humanities instructor who wants students to engage their minds with the challenging ideas and values inherent in so much of the literature we teach. Solzhenitsyn maintains that communism rejects all absolute concepts of morality, that it scoffs at any consideration of "good" and "evil" as indisputable categories, and that the relativity of values to which the West may so ardently subscribe is really a communist idea. He says also that communism has been most successful in infecting the whole world with a belief in the relativity of good and evil. He warns us further about the values crisis already engulfing the world; and like the energy crisis, the hunger crisis, and the ecological crisis, the world-wide values shift could carry impending disaster for succeeding generations. Solzhenitsyn calls this shift a "turning point where the hierarchy of values which we have venerated, and which we use to determine what is important to us and what causes our hearts to beat, is starting to rock and collapse."[1]

Even as Solzhenitsyn wrote, a great many new college courses were already reflecting our increasing concern with ethics and values: professional ethics, legal and business ethics, medical and nursing ethics, and individual moral responsibility. In addition, news analysts continue to tell us daily about our shared responsibility for ecological disaster, about ethics and standards for news writers and publishers, and most recently about our "moral responsibility to speak up against apartheid." Clearly, as a society we are trying to sort out the often confusing, conflicting interrelationship of economic, political, social, religious, and personal values.

The college classroom, as always, has a most important role in responding to, as well as creating, a heightened awareness of the world of ideas and values. In the fall of 1969, Robert D. Cuff, a University of Rochester history professor, addressed an entering class of students with this statement:

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> There is a vital process going on in the university. It is the process by which one discovers who he is and what values he will choose to live by . . . . The most meaningful measure of a life is not the amount of information accumulated. It is rather the kinds of values made manifest . . . . When a student enters college he enters an arena not only of knowledge, but also of moral values . . . of concepts like justice, truth, honesty, equality. The university has to permit [and encourage] its students to discover a moral vision of themselves . . . a vision which compels them to ask: does society measure up to my definition of justice; does society measure up to my definition of honesty?[2]

Because of its wealth of values material, the literature class is an important part of this vital process of searching for and examining values. Against Solzhenitsyn's challenging vision of our world in a values crisis, literature frequently gives us for study a picture of the individual at a crisis point, in conflict with his own values or with society's values. The value-searching function of the college classroom, the very subject matter we teach, together with the urgency and realism of Solzhenitsyn's warning, all give the humanities teacher a "moral imperative" for teaching values in a literature class.

How, specifically, can we accomplish a values study in an introduction to literature class? What are workable methods? Which particular works lend themselves to a values study? (There is no one list, of course, but rather a great many titles and a variety of ways to organize them.) Where does an instructor begin, and how does he or she choose from and organize a multiplicity of social, personal, and moral values? What is the major thrust or focus of this course? In answering these questions, I would like to share a few ideas which often seem to "work" and which go right to the heart of the values conflict that affects both the individual and our society. By "work" I mean getting the students actively, energetically engaged in reasoning about and debating the ideas and problems that a major, or minor, literary character agonizes over. For this essay, I will focus particularly on two short stories and the personal human values central to the meaning of each story.

Of the standard general questions for studying fiction and drama, I emphasize a few of the simplest ones: What is the protagonist's conflict? Is it physical? intellectual? emotional? psychological? moral? Is the protagonist, as he struggles with his conflict, a static or a developing character? What kind of person is the protagonist? Pursued extensively, these central questions provide not only an in-depth analysis of a literary work, but also an in-depth consideration of those values and ideas that "cause our hearts to beat." The literature we are studying, after all, reflects the individual and society of real life grappling with these questions, probing the world we live in, deeply and

introspectively searching for "bottom-line" standards of conduct, principles by which to live, to act, to speak.

As a class, let us imagine that we have just finished reading, for example, Hernando Tellez's short story "Just Lather, That's All," and are ready to begin with the seemingly simple question "what is the conflict?" in order to take a close look at the Barber's crisis. The question provokes at first the easy answer: he is simply arguing with himself, trying to make up his mind whether he will be a hero, loyal to the revolutionaries, and kill Captain Torres, or a coward, disloyal to the revolutionaries, and let Captain Torres go unharmed. Because they see several points of view (as does the Barber), the students themselves quickly throw out the easy answer, and we become involved in defining not only "hero" and "coward" but more particularly the kind of conflict the Barber is experiencing. We determine that there are several layers of conflict and that the political setting of the story is really only a complicating backdrop for the Barber's moral conflict: Should he kill or not? What does it mean to kill? Is it right or wrong to kill an evil man who has killed many others? Is all killing wrong? He agonizes and trembles with his "Hamlet conflict."

We must use another simple question to probe a little deeper. What kind of man is the Barber? We need something other than a label of hero or coward. What is it? and how do we know? Careful examination of the Barber's internal monologue reveals a sensitive man who uses his profession to express his intimate relationship with his fellow man. "Intimate" seems to be the right word, because he must caress the captain's cheek and neck and he must move his barber's razor most carefully over his throat and face without spilling a drop of blood. The students, as well as the Barber, are surprised to discover that though he thinks he despises Captain Torres, he is responding to him, describing him, caring for him as a man. The Barber, in effect, has been searching his thoughts for the fundamental premise on which his moral convictions rest. The students are quick to perceive now that this fundamental premise concerns not a political theory but a basic human relationship.

We move forward with another simple question. The Barber says to himself a number of times that he trembles with fear. What does he fear? The tensions of this story include not only the Barber's fear of killing Torres, but his great desire to avoid answering such questions as, is it wrong to kill? or is it right to kill *this* man? Along with his desire to avoid the whole ordeal, he is deeply afraid because he knows he must answer and he knows he must act on his answer. The students now see that he is afraid because he is making an ultimate, irrevocable decision that defines who and what he is. His decision to let Torres go unharmed represents several basic human values: being one's brother's keeper, accepting responsibility for one's fellow man, feeling a sensitivity to another human being, considering oneself less important than an ideal of human behavior. At the time

the Barber makes his decision not to kill Torres, he is confident of his almost complete anonymity among the rebels, that Torres does not know who he is or that he is afraid. The Barber believes that his fear and his decision are parts of his private thoughts; he thinks he may have to answer to the revolutionaries, but not to Torres.

However, the Barber is not confident of his decision, because he feels damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. Torres' concluding comment proves him right: "They told me that you'd kill me. I came to find out. But killing isn't easy. You can take my word for it." Then we (and the Barber) are left with an ambiguous, puzzling "conclusion" and many questions about what will happen to this "moral man."

This story (included in the "conformity and rebellion" theme section of our particular anthology) cogently depicts a single man's moral conflict. He has been trying to find "his own place in the scheme of things." We have discovered with him that his "place" depends upon a moral idea of who he is in relation to other men (not simply as an isolated individual) and to one particular man whom he wants to despise. Now we are ready for the question, is he a static or developing character? We must conclude that the Barber is a developing character — that is, he has experienced an inner change, a new wisdom about himself, a clarified sense of being. He thinks to himself, "No one [not even Torres] deserves to have someone else make the sacrifice of becoming a murderer." His "logical contrary" seems to be that "all men, including Torres, deserve the sacrifice of being cared for."

Whether or not he could continue to be a political rebel, we discern, has become irrelevant; but the Barber continues to tremble because his intellectual, moral self-examination has led him to put aside a lesser value (political rebellion) for a higher value — a responsibility for his fellow man. Although he accepts and acts on this value, he still trembles because he knows there will be a price, a sacrifice to be paid for making the "right" decision.

The Barber's inner conflict has something of a parallel in Herman Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener." Having followed the Barber's introspective journey, the students are ready for another story where the principal setting is once again within the protagonist's mind. We continue with the same "simple" questions, which are no longer reassuring because the students have discovered that simple questions demand complex reasoning and, in the literature that we are studying, a clear statement about a value system that guides a literary character's words and actions.

The lawyer-narrator's encounter with a pitiful scrap of a human being, Bartleby, becomes his crisis point, much to his surprise. He tells us early in the story, as we are trying to discover what kind of person he is, that he is a man

"who, from his youth, upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is best." His tolerant relationship with his employees, as well as the less-than-challenging work of his law practice, both illustrate this philosophy. This gentle, kind man is being rebelled against by Bartleby who says "I prefer not to" in response to all commands to work.

The lawyer's "easy way" is greatly disturbed because he wants to be kind to his fellow man, he wants to care for Bartleby, because this lonely forlorn scrivener has moved the lawyer's natural sympathies for his fellow man. Unlike the Barber who has reasoned out and arrived at the idea of being responsible for his fellow man, the lawyer has already accepted this moral value and reminds himself of the "divine injunction: 'a new commandment give I unto you, that ye shall love one another.' "

Defining the conflict in this story is difficult. It is not simply Bartleby against the lawyer-narrator, nor does the main conflict belong to Bartleby. (Torres and Bartleby are both minor but necessary characters to the meaning of each story — they provide the catalyst for each protagonist's crisis.) This story, essentially, is the narrator's long, tortured argument with himself about *how* he should carry out his understood relationship to his employee, to his fellow human being. However, knowing what his relationship should be is not sufficient; he greatly longs to be rid of Bartleby, and these are his questioning thoughts: "What shall I do? . . . I now said to myself, buttoning up my coat to the last button. What shall I do? What ought I to do? What does conscience say I *should* do with this man, or, rather, ghost? Rid myself of him, I must; go, he shall. But how?"

It seems fairly clear that the lawyer wants to conform to an ideal of caring for Bartleby. It also seems fairly clear that he wants to *rebel* against this "divine injunction." In his complex inner turmoil, he is not simply asking "what is the right thing to do?" His major questions are: Can I actually do the right thing? Do I have to do it?

We ask again if the protagonist is a developing character, does he change his ideas as he struggles with his inner conflict? Because he cannot satisfactorily resolve this conflict, of being able to act on his values, we must conclude that he is a static character. He knows, sadly, that it is easier to be responsible for one's fellow man when it is only for a morning or an afternoon, or when all that is required are words or minimal action. The reality, however, is that actions are also required, and then what is ethical as opposed to what one wants to do (usually to take the easiest way) presents a real conflict of values.

The Barber and the lawyer-narrator have both asked, in different settings and for different reasons, what is the highest principle of human dealing which guides my hand, my barber's knife, my whole body, my whole life? Neither the answers nor the consequences are easy. Both men long to be rid of the burden of

having to reason out the problem; much more, they long to be relieved of having to act on their beliefs. Torres, as an external force, requires the Barber to examine himself; the lawyer-narrator's close moral examination is self-imposed.

Our pursuit of meaning in both of these short stories has plunged us into discussing some basic human values as well as what it means to face an ultimate. We have also touched on what it means to be a rebel or a conformist and to act, as either, on a defensible principle that guides our decisions. The students have wrestled with definition of terms, ambiguity of meaning, and differing points of view. These two literary figures, as well as many others we meet, dramatize the intricate process of forming moral judgments, testing and refining them. With the Barber and the lawyer, the students have had to pause and reflect on some important aspects of critical, evaluative thinking, and they have had, necessarily, to think out all the reasoning steps taken by each one. Consequently, they have, at the very least, gained an understanding of "where the other fellow is" and an empathy for his dilemma.

Throughout the semester, we agonize with a number of characters in addition to the Barber and the lawyer. For example, with Ivan ("The Death of Ivan Ilych") we learn about unconditional love and a moral responsibility to cherish life as a gift; and with Antigone and Creon *(Antigone)* learn about the futility of intellectual arrogance and the need for humility and wisdom in respecting a power greater than ourselves. Literature offers us for study an endless list of many other characters, situations, and values. This is especially true when the main focus and framework of an introductory course are some of the persistent themes in literature: the loss of innocence with the growth of experience, the problems of conformity and rebellion, the power of love and hate, the inevitability of death, devouring time, the mutability of all things, the transience of beauty, and the never-ending search for identity. Organized under these persistent themes, literature frequently depicts a character in some thought-action, some crisis situation, in which he finds himself asking such large questions as what does it mean to be a human being? What is man's relationship to other men? To God? What is the meaning of life? He doesn't always arrive at all or, sometimes, any of the large answers; nevertheless, his struggle helps us to think seriously about our own values.

Over a semester, the students, and the instructor as well, have to become more thoughtful, more aware of the value-laden issues that permeate literature and our society. With this kind of study, we are answering the moral imperative to deal with values; we are engaging in the vital process of discovering a moral vision of ourselves; and we may be re-discovering, re-establishing some of the not-so-relative basic human values. Further, we find the developing/static character concept is not restricted to a literary study. This examination of moral

values allows us to see ourselves, individually and within society, as dynamic, developing characters.

Notes

[1]Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "A Look into the 'Dragon's belly,'" *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, February 13, 1977. (Excerpted from his book *Warning To The West*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, 1976.)

[2]Robert D. Cuff, "The University and Values," address to an entering class at the University of Rochester, 1969, in *Rochester Review*, Rochester, New York, Winter 1969.

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Teaching Writing and Teaching Virtue

Eugene Garver

When I first started to learn about how people teach writing, I found that most of the prominent debates within the profession sounded familiar. What is the subject of a writing course — is it everything, personal experience, writing itself? Are writing skills field-specific, or can we teach writing across the disciplines: is a good writer about chemistry the same as a good writer about insurance premiums? Who is the good writer about chemistry: the chemist or the writer? What is the connection between knowing something and being able to write well? Is writing a skill separate from figuring out what one wants to say, one's intentions? Is writing a separate subject alongside chemistry, business, and literature, or is it no subject at all, but a way of dealing with any subject?

I was able — I won't say how long it took — to figure out why all this sounded so familiar to me. Plato records just the same debates, except his characters are talking, not about teaching writing, but about teaching virtue. What is virtue about — everything? (Can a man, in Justice Holmes' terms, "live greatly" anywhere?) Satisfying or controlling one's desires? Whatever the politicians and lawyers are talking about? Good and evil? Is virtue field-specific — is the courage manifested in facing up to debts the same courage as the one that stands firm on the battlefield? To whom would you entrust your money, a banker or a just man? Does virtue show you how to act with regard to your desires, either controlling them or satisfying them, or does being virtuous actually change the desires you have? Is virtue an additional sphere of life, in addition to money-making, loving one's family, worshipping the gods, and relaxing in sport, or is virtue a way of doing good in any field?

Once the initial analogy between teaching writing and teaching virtue struck me, further examples came quickly. In both, the ideal is to appear natural, nonchalant: the best art conceals itself as art, and a virtue that appears studied is the legalistic virtue of the pharisee. Since neither virtue nor what used to be called eloquence should appear to be a product of study, whether either is teachable at all becomes questionable. In both, teachability becomes doubtful

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since the best men and the best writers do not seem to be good teachers, or even good judges of who should teach their children. Virtue and writing are two fields in which it is strange to talk about the existence of experts, of professional teachers. In both, study seems to produce hypocrisy, the appearance of virtue or truth without the reality; study produces the ability to deceive, and destroys one's natural inclination toward the true and the good.[1]

I then realized that I had been rather stupid all along. It's no coincidence that the same debates and issues that Plato records are visible today in *College English* and *College Communication and Composition:* the people Plato shows talking with Socrates are the original writing teachers, the Sophists. The Sophists claimed to teach eloquence, an ability to speak persuasively and hence become politically powerful. Socrates would always ask them what they taught their students to be eloquent about, and pressing the point, would get the Sophists to admit that their students became eloquent about goodness, and that of course they either were good to start with or became good along the way, without extra charge.

The advantage to constructing analogies between widely separate things is that one always has further questions about how far the analogies extend. In this case, I argue this way: the Sophists found teaching eloquence to be bound up with teaching virtue. What about today's writing teachers? Have they found teaching writing to be bound up, in similar ways, with teaching moral goodness? Naturally, I found the answer to be yes.

Even before I give some examples of the way moral grounds often underlie our criticism of writing, I can submit a proof that we do think of writing as a moral act by pointing to the sorts of emotional reactions a teacher often experiences in reading and talking about student writing. What is the source of all the anger that reading papers engenders; what is the source of the tremendous amount of sarcasm that characterizes the comments teachers write? Spelling errors or solecisms wouldn't provoke those emotions; we seem to make judgments not about the student *qua* speller, *qua* sentence combiner, or *qua* transgressor of the laws of transformational grammar, but somehow *qua* person, as a moral agent, or a character, whatever that means. A couple of examples will serve to show that our grounds for evaluating student writing are more often a matter of the kind of character expressed than we admit.

Many of the responses we make to bad writing seem to be moral responses, although people back away from noticing that the grounds of criticism are moral. Look, for example, at the epithets William Coles uses in describing his responses to his students' papers:

> Triumphs of self-obliteration . . . put up jobs . . . No observation was too trivial to escape oratorical pronouncement . . . no moral

> stance too obvious to assume. ("After all, professionals are not necessarily good people.") So far as the proposition [in the assignment] was concerned, the students handled it in the way that a Themewriter traditionally handles the Themetopic, as a moral issue (on about the level needed to condemn the man-eating shark), which is to say inside a moral vacuum from which all living concerns are carefully excluded.
>
> How do you feel about writing where somebody uses the last trumpet to tell you that water runs downhill?
>
> . . . It was speaking for a world view about as comprehensive and as complicated as that of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. . . . A bullet-proofed argument.[2]

While today's writing teachers respond to student writing morally, recognizing that there is a moral side to good and bad writing, they are most hesitant to profess to be teaching moral goodness. There is always something odd about claiming to teach virtue, but that discomfort is compounded, and the divergence between actual practice and professional ideology made even greater than it need be, by the now current view of morality that makes it a private matter, one of personal choice — if it can be called choice — beyond argument, such that one person does not have the right to judge another, and such that any attempt to make morality the subject of discussion is seen as the imposition of a set of values on someone else. Put such values beyond the reach of argument and teaching, and teaching writing becomes value-free, value neutral — modern, favorable sounding ways of saying amoral. I don't here want to talk about the grounds for such a version of morality, or the political causes for its popularity — besides the comfort it offers writing teachers — but only to ask the reader to recall that there are other versions, in which the idea of teaching virtue need not be so implausible, or so morally offensive.

I attack this version of morality, which makes it a private matter, a matter of the heart as opposed to the head, not because I don't sympathize with the need for some way of avoiding calling oneself a teacher of goodness and improver of humanity, but because I see another side of that same picture of morality doing great harm, not only in teaching writing but in general. Conceive of morality as concerned with a private world of ends, and one can push off all responsibility onto that world — the writing teacher just teaches a technique, an art, which enables anyone to express any intentions more effectively, without touching on the nature of those intentions at all. Just as the physicist isn't responsible for the uses to which his discoveries are put, or the brewer for drunk driving, so the writing teacher and the writer as such are not responsible for the purposes aimed at and the truths alleged in writing. The ability to brush aside in this way questions about the moral dimensions of one's work depends on simple

distinctions between ends and means that people do not want to maintain once they are made explicit. The choice here is between asserting that teaching writing is simply giving instruction in an amoral technology, and recognizing, and trying to explore, the moral dimensions of writing as an activity.

Beside this false ideology, with its neat separation of means and ends, there is a good reason why writing teachers must hesitate to admit that they are teaching virtue. Part of that hesitation doesn't rest on a simplified view of morality but is the instinctual perception of a problem at the heart of the whole project of teaching virtue. As I suggested, eloquence and virtue are both thought to be wonderful things, but the eloquence and virtue acquired through teaching are always suspect. Here it is not the activity of the teacher that is the primary object of suspicion, but the effect on the student. Studied eloquence and virtue are accused of being superficial, unnatural and insincere; both make the weaker case appear the stronger, using a learned skill to upset the natural order of good and bad. Virtue and eloquence are supposed to be like sex, not something one has to learn in order to do. Learning eloquence and virtue then appear as ways of hiding one's true intentions rather than expressing one's intentions effectively. For both virtue and eloquence, there is something shameful about having to learn them, as though one's natural gifts were not enough, and therefore someone who is well taught hides the facts that he has been taught, the best art concealing that it is art. It is no wonder that teachers should shy away from professing to teach virtue, since learned virtue seems almost like a contradiction in terms.[3]

To the Greeks, and in a different way the Romans, the connections between teaching eloquence and teaching virtue were obvious, since the same people were specialists in both, and so the similarities I noted between the issues raised about eloquence and about virtue would be no surprise. But it is a surprise to us moderns, and I think we can turn my slowness in recognizing the intimate relation between teaching writing and teaching virtue into an advantage. Since today the suggestion that teaching writing and teaching virtue should be related comes as a surprise, we are in a position to raise questions about the connection, to wonder why eloquence and virtue should be related, about whether their historical association is just an accident, or whether there are good reasons why the teacher of eloquence should be the first candidate for teaching virtue. These were evident matters of fact to the Greeks, and so they couldn't raise questions about them, but they are anything but evident matters of fact to us.

The strongest evidence that this association of virtue with eloquence is no historical accident comes from the fact that contemporary composition teachers, presumably without prompting from ancient voices, find themselves reluctantly raising the same moral questions about teaching eloquence that Socrates and the Sophists, and Cicero and Quintilian, and Renaissance

rhetoricians, also raised. While the issues stay the same, contemporary writing teachers share with the Greek sophists a hesitation to admit that they are teaching virtue, and seem to lack the Roman confidence that the demands of morality, citizenship, scholarship, and eloquence live in harmony. Thus Coles says:

> The self I am speaking of here . . . is a literary self, not a mock or false self, but a stylistic self, the self construable from the way words fall on a page. The other self, the identity of a student, is something with which I as a teacher can have nothing to do, not if I intend to remain a teacher.
>
> It's not the character of the writer we're talking about or concerned with here. The subject here is writing, what these sentences represent the writer as. What the writer is we can never know and is up to him anyway.[4]

Imagine the questions Socrates would ask about that last sentence. The assumption Coles makes, that there is a real self left untouched by his criticism of the stylistic self, is made on the basis of no evidence at all, and its purpose is to protect the teacher from the full consequences of what he's doing. The writing teacher does not want to be told that he is teaching virtue — it's too big a responsibility, and how could someone, anyone, be qualified to teach it, to teach it professionally?

Although people reject the idea that virtue can be taught through teaching writing, I think most people have a lot less trouble with the thesis that vice can be taught. Most people would agree that learning to write can be corrupting, can teach people to manipulate others, to develop contempt for their audience and hence for people in general. As Cicero pointed out, rhetoric seems to be the cause of factions, of the subversion of public processes of debate for private gain; from the beginning, rhetoric, especially studied rhetoric, has had the reputation of making the weaker case appear the stronger.[5]

My argument is a simple one. If vice can be taught, so can virtue. If learning eloquence can be corrupting, can lead to immorality, then it can also be ennobling; if rhetoric can make the weaker case appear the stronger, then it should also be able to make the weaker person actually become the stronger, the better.

I know that many people will not find that argument sketch immediately compelling, although it is difficult to say just what is wrong with it; why shouldn't it be true that if vice can be taught, so can virtue?

* * * *

What are the real grounds for our condemning rhetoric for teaching vice, for making people worse, for destroying a community by turning eloquence to

private advantage? Any skill can be used for good or bad purposes, and we don't say that teaching economics or military strategy teaches vice because it allows the wicked man to be more successful. Our suspicion of rhetoric must be based on more than the fact that it is a skill that can be abused, as any skill can. When the Sophists tried to avoid Socrates' questions by disclaiming responsibility for their students' abuses of art, their disclaimers were rightly taken as unpersuasive. Bad writing is bad not, or not only, because of the further bad purposes it lends itself to, but because it is somehow itself bad. If rhetoric is to teach virtue, it will not be by taking the same skill and subordinating it to good purposes, the way Augustine talks about adapting pagan arts to pious ends; good writing must somehow itself be a good act.

There is good reason for the suspicion that rhetoric always seems to attract. The attitude towards rhetoric is not simple mistrust, like that directed at the door-to-door salesman, the used car dealer, or the loan shark. There is something attractive about the rhetorician, although sometimes we feel guilty about being attracted. (See Hippocrates at the beginning of the *Protagoras*.) Any art is a skill that can be used for good or ill, but our attitude towards rhetoric is not simply a response to being in the presence of such an amoral skill. In addition to being used for good or bad purposes, any art embodies values of its own. Tennis embodies values of grace, strategy, and competitiveness that we can admire, or condemn. Professional tennis players can use their skills to make lots of money, or for the greater glory of country, or race, and we might lament the fact that admirable skills are being used for disreputable ends. But clearly our response to rhetoric is more.

I suggest that we are uncomfortable about rhetoric in ways that have no analogy for other skills like tennis because the skills that might be abused when rhetoric is directed at bad ends are moral skills. We can condemn the tennis player for the ends selected, but our attitude towards the rhetorician touches not only the ends but something about the skill itself. Plato points out that any goods can be used for good or ill, except virtue, which can never be used for bad purposes. Rhetoric makes us uneasy because it doesn't comfortably fit into either the category of a mere skill that can be directed to different ends, or into the category of virtues, modes of action that cannot be abused. Instead we seem to find moral abilities, abilities without which moral action is not fully successful, but which can be used for purposes outside themselves. According to the distinction between skills and virtues, or between amoral techniques and values, something like a moral ability should be a contradiction in terms, and so rhetoric is a challenge to that simple moral distinction.

An actor can deceive by imitating and representing the actions and emotions of a character; what does rhetoric imitate or represent in order to make the weaker case appear the stronger? Hobbes gives a single sentence that

captures the answer perfectly, and the rest of this essay can be taken as a commentary on that sentence: "Eloquence is power; because it is seeming prudence."

Hobbes does not say, eloquence is power, because the eloquent man can manipulate the passions of his audience and get them to act out of anger, indignation, hate, or love instead of reason. He does not say, eloquence is power, because the good speaker can trick the audience, act on their unconscious, resembling the magician who distracts the audience with one hand while doing the trick with the other. These are common descriptions of rhetoric, but the deceptions of rhetoric are much more serious, and these other answers distract from that seriousness by separating what the rhetorician is doing from what he appears to do, doing with one hand while appearing with the other. Hobbes' answer is a better answer because what the orator is doing *is* appearing in a certain way.

For these other explanations of how rhetoric deceives, how eloquence has power, the remedy seems to be to make laws against speakers using tricks, and to make the audience more sophisticated, more aware of its own tendencies to be swayed emotionally and more attentive to the magician's tricks.[6] If eloquence is power because it is seeming prudence, though, the only remedy is more eloquence and more prudence. What skills could we use to suspect, catch, and denounce the deceptive speaker? The only way we can recognize that a rhetorician has deceived us is through our own act of prudence. It doesn't take magic to spot the tricks of the magician, but it does take prudence to spot the tricks of the clever speaker. If rhetoric were like acting or magic, one could legislate against it and train audiences not to be taken in.[7] But if eloquence is power because it is seeming prudence, the only remedy is real prudence.

We need real prudence to counteract the temptations of seeming prudence, but the only way to find, and use, real prudence is through eloquence — unexpressed, inarticulate prudence is no prudence at all. It is with this paradox in mind that Cicero starts the *De Inventione* by wondering whether more good or evil has come to mankind through the invention of eloquence, and he displays the benefits and dangers of eloquence through a variation on the myth Protagoras, one of the first Sophists, tells in Plato's *Protagoras*.

Protagoras' myth is designed to show why there are experts in ship-building and military strategy, but none in justice or virtue. Particular skills were distributed to mankind the way particular modes of life, of surviving and hunting, were distributed among the animals. Some animals run fast and some have sharp teeth and similarly some men make shoes and others make ships. But such specialized men could not survive in isolation, and they couldn't live together either, so Zeus ordered Hermes to give justice to mankind and not to

distribute it like the specialized skills, but to give each man a share in justice, piety, and eloquence, since they are the bonds that hold communities together, and so everyone must have them. There can be no experts in virtue or eloquence, because everyone must be adept.[8]

In Protagoras' myth and its variations, we see the closest possible connection between language and culture or community, between eloquence and virtue and vice. In the first place, language makes community possible since without being able to talk about the just and the good, human communities, association for more than just pleasure and advantage, are impossible. At that low level, at least, virtue and eloquence are necessarily associated. But it doesn't yet follow that teaching eloquence teaches virtue, since the kind of eloquence and virtue we are so far talking about has nothing to do with teaching and learning. (Indeed, Protagoras seems to have argued himself into a corner. He is trying to prove that he can teach virtue, but has instead shown that virtue is a universal gift, hence apparently not something that needs a teacher!)

In the second place, as Cicero points out in his continuation of the myth, eloquence embodies and teaches vice. Someone discovers that the same power that binds men together and permits formation of the concepts of the just and the good, is also a power to be used for private gain, a power that creates factions; in addition to being a power that allows one to manifest one's desires and ideas and come to agreement, it is at the same time a power for disguising one's desires and ideas, deceiving others, making the weaker case appear the stronger.

On the one hand, eloquence and justice are together at the foundation of the community. On the other hand, eloquence works in the cause of injustice and corruption. Out of those two premises, how is it possible to show that teaching eloquence teaches virtue? The very fact that rhetoric can be abused means that the power of speech has a certain autonomy — speech is not just the automatic expression of inner mental states; therefore speech is accessible to teaching. If eloquence were the automatic effect of virtue, then we would just teach virtue, and let good speech follow in its train. The deceptive uses of rhetoric prove that our communicative abilities are at least to that extent within our control, and so we have to take responsibility for the effects that eloquence has, on ourselves as well as on others. If effective communication can be the direct object of teaching, then we have open at least the possibility that people could become virtuous through learning eloquence.

The fact that eloquence can be used to deceive means that eloquence can itself be taught, and hence might lead to virtue. So far the argument doesn't prove very much. But recall how rhetoric deceived, not like the magician, but because, as Hobbes said, eloquence is seeming prudence. Eloquence is taken to

be prudence because it sometimes is prudence, and because one cannot find prudence without eloquence. Eloquence can be found in the absence of prudence, but prudence never can be seen without eloquence. Moreover, "seeming prudence" need not mean apparent prudence, something which might be a sign of an underlying real prudence but might just be the appearance without the reality. As George Yoos says of the ethical qualities of the speaker or writer which are displayed in a piece of rhetoric:

> Questions of appearance and reality are not applicable where the qualities I have described prevail. The showing or displaying of an ethical appeal *is* the appeal, like showing the colors. One does not pretend to display the flag; it is displayed or it is not. Displaying ethical appeal is displaying a particular kind of commitment in communication, though like all commitments this one, too, is subject to reneging.[9]

The ambivalence people have toward the moral qualities of rhetoric is that seeming prudence seems to be partly like showing the flag, something whose appearance *is* the reality, and partly like manners as a sign of breeding, a sign that can be faked, but is supposed to be a sign of a further inner reality.

* * * *

As a way of spelling out further what it would mean for virtue to be taught through eloquence, let me consider an obvious, and serious, objection. (Like the Sophist reluctantly admitting that he teaches virtue, I keep approaching my thesis indirectly.) If virtue is acquired through becoming eloquent, then conversely inarticulateness must be immoral. But that seems a rather hard saying. As Kant pointed out, our intuitions, our innate moral sense rejects any idea that morality might be unequally distributed, like a talent, or that it might require teaching, like a branch of knowledge; Kant is here echoing Zeus' remarks in Protagoras' myth that justice must be equally distributed. How could morality, or even some particular part of it, some particular virtue, depend on learning to be eloquent?

To say that virtue is acquired through becoming eloquent is a little more plausible if one says instead that effectiveness is a part of virtue, that even if ineffectiveness is not always culpable, we do have duties to try to make our moral convictions as effective as possible. Virtue consists not only in loving and honoring the good, embracing the right values, but in doing something about it. As Stravinsky is supposed to have said, the road to good intentions is paved with hell. (This seems to have been the original claim of the sophists, not to make people more moral, but more effective, therefore making the moral able to do more good.)

The point of the rhetorical view of morality, tying it to eloquence in the foundation of the state, is that an end/means distinction between moral principles and effectiveness will not hold up.[10] Such distinction assumes that one can first decide what is right, or what is to be done, and then turn to rhetoric to try to figure out how to persuade others, how to get what one wants. But sometimes, at least, figuring out how to become effective, how to make one's principles effectual in action, is a matter of deliberation, of deciding what is best to do. Inarticulateness, then, is not just a matter of having the right beliefs but unfortunately not being able to convince others of them; instead inarticulateness is the inability to bring those moral convictions to bear on a concrete problem. Here is a moral problem that eloquence can do something about.

It doesn't take much moral ability to decide that mass murderers shouldn't be let free immediately, that a starving person should be fed, that slavery shouldn't be permitted, that the American government shouldn't reward other governments for policies of torture. It takes rather more ability to decide whether the facts support a verdict in a more usual criminal trial, or to organize an educational policy that is responsive to people's needs and interests without thereby cutting the students off from possibilities that are more liberating, without thereby simply reinforcing the *status quo*, or to promote a foreign policy that reduces abhorrent policies in foreign governments without destroying either the governments or American influences over them. A person who can decide only on the former kind of case, the easy case, has some equipment missing. Even if one doesn't want to call it moral equipment, without it the person cannot act successfully and morally. It is no accident that prudence has those two meanings, that it is the name of an intellectual virtue and an amoral skill — effectiveness is a way of putting one's values to work, and it is a part of any value. In the *Gorgias* Socrates refutes Polus, who thinks that rhetoric can help someone get what he wants without also helping him to figure out what he wants. The distinction between one's values and their application doesn't hold up, and hence the view that eloquence is somehow neutral between competing values doesn't hold up either.

When that simple distinction between ends and means dissolves, with it disappears the distinction between deciding what one wants and persuading others; deliberation and judgment are as much required for determining what is best as for persuading others. We can still call rhetoric effective communication, but now it becomes effective in two senses, not only persuading others so you can get what you want, but also effective as discovering how to make one's principles effective in a given situation, finding out what those principles mean and what actions they suggest. Virtue is acquired through becoming eloquent because a single process makes someone effective in both senses — it is through giving *force* to one's decisions that one gives *meaning* to one's principles.[11]

It is worth stopping here to draw the parallel from teaching virtue to teaching writing: what is equivalent in writing to the distinction between means and ends? The distinction between finding out what one means and figuring out how to express it, between invention and style, writing and editing, familiar both to ancients and moderns, is supported by that untenable distinction between means and ends. And just like the distinction between means and ends, the distinction between writing and editing looks plausible at first, but really makes sense only if we focus on the most local, final editing. As soon as editing involves examining decisions any broader than word choice and punctuation, it becomes re-writing, which is a kind of writing, and the writer is then at the same time figuring out what to say and how to say it. (The very term "re-writing" thus neatly captures the way in which figuring out how to say something makes us discover what we want to say, the way in which deliberating about means is a way of determining ends.) So the amoral, instrumental, neutral conception of writing —or of what is teachable in writing — advocated today most prominently in E. D. Hirsch's *Philosophy of Composition,* dissolves too.

The ambivalence associated with eloquence thus comes from the fact that effectiveness and prudence both have two aspects, an amoral one and a moral one. It follows that teaching writing on the one hand teaches virtue and on the other produces an amoral art, capable of being used for further purposes, good or bad. There is a single ability called prudence which is both the ability to make moral principles effective in action and the cleverness of figuring out means to any stipulated end, good or bad. One cannot separate the virtuous from the neutral senses of effectiveness and prudence in teaching — there is no way of purifying rhetoric, and teaching an art of practical reasoning, that cannot be abused. They cannot be separated in teaching, but the two senses of effectiveness can be separated in action, and someone can first figure out what is to be done and then figure out how to get someone else to do it. If teaching writing teaches virtue through teaching practical reasoning, i.e., the ability to bring moral principles to bear, through deliberation and judgment, on particular practical problems, then the abilities learned in writing can always be subordinated to further purposes, to applying further principles, and hence those abilities can always be corrupted. Because the same ability allows someone to speak persuasively and to reason practically, it does not follow that that ability will be used for its proper purpose; there is no guarantee that eloquence will further the cause of the right; there is only a guarantee that without the abilities learned through rhetoric, there is no chance of acting fully morally.

* * * *

If my argument so far is successful, I have shown that virtue can be taught, that teaching writing teaches virtue. If so, we now have a more practical

problem: what consequences does my thesis have for teaching writing? If we recognize this moral side of teaching writing, what consequences should that acknowledgment have for how writing is taught? There is, first, a negative conclusion worth stating to get out of the way. Teaching writing cannot be supplemented by preaching about the ends to which the student should direct his talents, and the student does not become virtuous by acquaintance with the great heroes and actions of the past. The function of training in writing cannot be to present examples for inspiration or to inculcate principles through examples.[12] This highly popular form of humanistic or moral education seems completely excluded by my conception of the identity of practical reason and effective communication. Teaching eloquence does not inculcate the right values; it teaches how to bring values to bear in action. If one thinks that today's overriding moral problem is that people have the wrong values, that all that good action requires is having the right allegiances, then teaching prudence would not be of much interest. If one thinks instead that such values by themselves are not morally very interesting, that the principal moral problem of today is learning how to deliberate and bring values to bear in action — indeed, that thinking such an application is easy or automatic is one of the main sources of our current moral and political problems — then teaching prudence through eloquence becomes a compelling problem. One acquires virtue by learning eloquence through learning the structure and subject of practical reasoning; through writing, one learns to locate oneself in the field of the practical, to become in a fuller sense an agent.[13]

In the first place, then, teaching writing teaches virtue by teaching the structure of practical reasoning. Bacon distinguishes two methods of presenting what one thinks, and his distinction is extremely rich for our purposes:

> The most real diversity of method is of method referred to Use, and method referred to Progression; whereof the one may be termed Magistral, and the other of Probation.
>
> The later whereof seemeth to be *via deserta et interclusa* [a way that is abandoned and stopped up]. For as knowledges are now delivered, there is a kind of contract of error between the deliverer and the receiver: for he that delivereth knowledge desireth to deliver it in such form as may be best believed, and not as may be best examined; and he that receiveth knowledge desireth rather present satisfaction than expectant inquire; and so rather not to doubt than not to err; glory making the author not to lay open his weakness, and sloth making the discipline not to know his strength.
>
> But knowledge that is delivered as a thread to be spun on, ought to be delivered and intimated, if it were possible, *in the same method wherein it was invented;* and so is it possible of knowledge

> induced. . . . For it is in knowledge as it is in plants: if you mean to use the plant, it is no matter for the roots; but if you mean to remove it to grow, then it is more assured to rest upon roots than slips. So the delivery of knowledge (as it is now used) is as of fair bodies of trees without the roots; good for the carpenter, but not for the planter; but if you will have sciences grow, it is less matter for the shaft or body of the tree, so you look well to the taking up of the roots.[14]

Writing by the probative method, delivering it to the audience by the same method by which it was discovered in the first place, displays the structure of practical reasoning in the presentation. By learning to display the structure of practical reasoning, students learn to engage in structured practical reasoning. Bacon is not claiming that *all* presentation ought to be by the probative method, presenting the process of inquiry as well as its results, although his talk of a "contract of error" at the heart of the magistral method suggests that there have to be special reasons for not using the superior method. Although students need training in both, it is through writing by the probative method that one gets practice in the structure of practical reasoning. Teaching students to present a process of deliberation and judgment is teaching students to engage in a moral, and difficult, activity. Writing here is a practical activity without risks usually attendant on action. (There *are* risks, which I shall discuss below, when talking about the relation between writer and subject, but those risks are different in kind from the dangers of practical errors.) And therefore virtue can be a training ground for further moral action as well as a form of moral action itself. As a form of moral action, eloquence embodies prudence, a virtue. As training for further action, eloquence teaches those amoral skills of prudence that can be used in pursuit of further ends. Within the act of writing, eloquence is seeming prudence to the extent that it displays the structure of practical reason.

My use of Bacon must not be confused with the currently popular pedagogic talk about "process," about the student's writing replicating the process of writing. The probative method presents the structure of deliberation that leads to some result, but that structure is not to be identified with the experiential episodes that led from data to result. There is no single, unique process of deliberation which must be followed to generate a single conclusion; on the contrary, one can always offer several deliberative, probative arguments for a conclusion arrived at in one way. In fact, the stronger the conclusion, the less it is tied to a single method of derivation, the more it is possible to affirm it on a variety of grounds. (This is one of the reasons for Aristotle's asserting that the true is in fact easier to prove, more persuasive, than the false.) Presenting the process of experience that led to a decision means ignoring considerations of persuasion, while I can deliberate, judge, arrive at a conclusion, and still have to worry about how to be convincing; I can think about persuading an audience

without making that second stage magisterial. The man of practical experience or practical wisdom can have an advantage, due to dexterity, flexibility, ability to see things from a variety of perspectives, all the practical skills acquired through writing well, and can exercise those skills without using a magisterial method; he can be authoritative without being despotic. Therefore the tactics of persuasion can be subject to prudent, rather than merely manipulative, considerations. By learning to present a structure of deliberation, students acquire prudential ways of speaking to an audience. Successful and ethical persuasion must give the audience good reasons why *they* should believe, not good reasons why the speaker believes.

Teaching the structure of practical reasoning addresses a problem many writing teachers, and others, have expressed in different ways. Coles complains that his students' papers are "one sentence deep," but doesn't show what that metaphor means. Ohmann complains that by teaching students to "Use Concrete, Specific, Definite Language" we are teaching the ability to pad, to fill out a general proposition with examples, but not to develop ideas further; yet he gives no sense of what it would look like to teach students to develop ideas.[15] Shaugnessy notes that "one of the most notable differences between experienced and inexperienced writers is that rate at which they reach closure upon a point. The experienced writer characteristically reveals a much greater tolerance for what Dewey called 'an attitude of suspended conclusion' than the inexperienced writer." She goes further and specifies the difficulty by saying: "The problem in most [basic writing] papers lies in the absence of *movement* between abstract and concrete statements. Papers tend to contain either cases or generalizations but not both."[16] However, a paper "containing both" would not evidently be an improvement — certain politicians are famous for offering nothing but abstract, one sentence deep, slogans *and* lots of anecdotes, but are conspicuously incapable of engaging in practical reasoning; the problem is to exhibit a movement between abstract and concrete. Shaugnessy gets no further than Coles and Ohmann in seeing what to do about this problem because for her the movement between abstract and concrete could only be one of specification or generalization. The structure of practical reason is richer and offers a version of that movement which is purposeful, moving from concrete data *and* general desires, ideas, and values to a practical conclusion which is both particular —something to be done — and general, representing the meaning of universal value in action, standing for the general idea. The traditional rhetorical genres of deliberation, judgment, and demonstration are different forms such movement can take.

In the second place, teaching writing teaches virtue by teaching the subject-matter of practical reasoning. To the question, what is writing about, contemporaries give several different answers, all predictable and all with

precedent in the Greek Sophists and Roman rhetoricians. Thus we are told that writing courses should be about writing, about the self and personal experience, about language, about anything at all. (Any intellectual art runs into the same difficulty. For example, logic can be about mathematics, about science, about knowledge, about arguments, about anything at all.) The Greek Sophists had similar trouble in answering Socrates' questions about the subject of rhetoric. Socrates shows the difficulties in maintaining that rhetoric is about everything, or about language itself, but we can ignore those problems here. Instead I want to look at the troubles Socrates finds with a third attempted answer the Sophists try to give him, that rhetoric is about politics, about the things people talk about in law-courts and public assemblies.

Socrates sees justice in Protagoras' claim that rhetoric is used mostly in political affairs but wonders about what consequences that has for the enterprise of teaching virtue. He points out that in the arts and sciences anyone other than an expert who spoke would be laughed at, while in politics, people would laugh if someone denied that he was competent to speak, suggesting that the fact that everyone is allowed to speak proves that virtue isn't a form of knowledge and thus cannot be taught. In a somewhat different, and more pointed, reply than Protagoras gives, Augustine accepts Socrates' challenge that there seem to be no specialists in justice; combining that with the tie between justice and eloquence asserted in Protagoras' myth, he defines the subject of rhetoric as that about which anyone would be ashamed not to have an opinion. I can avoid answering a question about atomic structure by saying, "It's not my field," but no one can dodge a question about the just and the unjust, right and wrong, by saying "That's not my field."

I propose to take Augustine's definition seriously and to specify the subject of rhetoric: how do we write about things anyone would be ashamed not to have an opinion about? There are three possible subjects for writing, constituted by three different relations among writer, audience, and thing talked about. There is the expression of personal experience and feeling, the exposition of certified truths, and argument about what are suggestively called essentially contested concepts — a modern way of saying things about which everyone has to have an opinion. Most writing courses make one of the first two subjects of discourse fundamental, either teaching the student how to construct narratives of personal experience — since that is something in which the student knows what he's talking about and can write with authority — or they teach the student to construct expositions of what is known, certified by some expert, and unearthed by what is euphemistically called research.[17] Both these popular forms of teaching writing inevitably, although inadvertently, teach a form of virtue. In writing about personal experience, the student learns to be an authority and thereby take responsiblity for what he says; in writing about known truths the

student becomes responsible for moderating his claims and learning to show deference before people who know better; the first kind of writing praises courage, the second temperance. In neither case, though, would anyone expect that the courage or moderation of a writer carried over to anything outside writing — the virtue is exhibited *in* the writing, but is not something taught *by* the writing.

I think that one of the reasons these two subjects are so popular is that they appear to exhaust the field — you have to be either objective or subjective, personal or impersonal, emotional or logical, impressionistic or scientific — and so anyone who doesn't like one feels forced to embrace the other. But these two subjects do not exhaust all thought and expression. In certain kinds of talk, especially the practical, there is the feeling that the dogmatism of scientific writing — "One answer (or my answer) is right and all others are wrong" — and the skepticism of personal writing — "All answers are equally true (or false, or beyond truth and falsity); everyone, especially me, has a right to his own opinion" — are both inadequate. The subject of practical reasoning is not just one's feelings and values, and not just some independent set of facts we must try to get right; the subject of practical reasoning is the practical, contingent facts that can be other than they are, that action can do something about, that are worth worrying about. The goal of practical reasoning is not to express a feeling or establish a truth that discredits opponents and is beyond refutation; it is to establish a proposition as plausible and worth acting on, both likely to succeed and something we want to succeed. Because the subject of rhetoric is things that can be otherwise, rhetorical arguments can themselves be otherwise, are always liable to be overcome by further argument. In discussing Bacon's probative method and the structure of practical reason I suggested that deciding on a policy for oneself and planning how to persuade others did not need to be two distinct acts; similarly here, in the subject of practical reasoning, deciding on a policy and persuading others are not distinct, whereas in traditional conceptions of expressive writing and reporting on certified facts, deciding what one feels or what the truth is and deciding on an effective presentation are completely distinct.

When the political — that on which everyone would be ashamed not to have an opinion, the essentially contested — is the central subject of writing, the two more popular subjects are not excluded, but are redefined as under the control of the discipline of practical reason. In this way, the old Sophists were right in claiming that rhetoric was a universal art, that its subject matter was everything; but rhetoric can be about everything without degenerating into an ability to talk without knowing what you're talking about just because it has a special, primary subject-matter, that on which anyone would be ashamed not to have an opinion.

The expression of personal experience becomes distanced from the mere

expressive, which students can hide behind, because expression must be convincing. My student writes: "I felt terrible. I felt like the worst thing in the world had happened." Such a sentiment isn't a lie, and the student defends herself by saying, "It's true, I did feel terrible." But the expression misfires — far from convincing a reader of the depth of her feelings, it instead suggests that the feeling couldn't be very deep if such a conventional expression felt comfortable, seemed to the writer to capture the feeling. Similarly, most student writing outside English classes is the reporting of what some expert has certified. The student is at the mercy of the expert; some respond by an extreme passivity and diffidence in writing, and others by a bluff, authoritarian stand, imitating the authorities; but most respond by trying to make their writing as impersonal as possible. Making essentially contested concepts, and the field of the practical, fundamental allows the student to separate what he is responsible for, what he can speak about, from what he must take on faith and merely transmit. This is the old rhetorical distinction between *technoi* and *atechnoi*, between arguments and considerations the writer must invent, and those that are ready-made and waiting to be used. Reducing everything to either the personal or the scientific is a way of trying to avoid responsibility, hence each is a form of immorality which tries to transform moral problems into amoral ones.

Essentially contested concepts are an ideal subject for writing because they are by definition ideas whose meaning is developed in discourse, in their aggressive and defensive uses. Therefore they are perfect examples of concepts where the distinction between what a term means and what it is being used for cannot make sense, where the distinction between the expression and the idea or experience being expressed cannot make sense. If I think of a personal experience I am going to narrate as a happy one, or a disturbing one, or even just a novel one, I cannot narrate the experience without at the same time defending, and developing, my idea of happiness, of disruption, or of novelty. If I report, as one student did, on the change in the kind of articles *Scientific American* has printed over the last fifty years, showing that the emphasis has changed from applied to pure science, I cannot simply report on the change without defending, and developing, my meanings of the essentially contested concepts pure and applied science. When I say that the more conventional subject of rhetoric, the political, is the field of the essentially contested *par excellence*, I mean that people see more readily the essentially contested character of political ideas, ideas about justice, honor, and the useful, than they do ideas descriptive either of personal experience or of objective realities such as science. People will admit freely that every idea of justice or piety is one among a set of competing ideas —as Kenneth Burke said, "I know you're a Christian, but a Christian against whom?"; but people are more inclined to say that there are as many ideas of a pleasant or a disturbing experience as there are people, and to say that there is

only one meaning to ideas such as science. But ideas in any region of experience can be treated as essentially contested, and when they are, they do not have some meaning which *is* expressed — the meaning an essentially contested concept has depends on *how* it is developed and expressed. In the so-called personal and scientific modes of writing, students do take responsibility for what they assert — either personal revelations or scientific truths can be more or less accurately stated — but they are taught to avoid responsibility for the act of writing itself, because that is supposed to just be the presentation of something other than itself. When politics, or the essentially contested, becomes the central subject for rhetoric, then one cannot so easily separate what is said from the saying; writing must not only report something of value, e.g., something true, but writing is saying something about something to someone, and thus the author must take responsibility for the saying as well as for what is said. Eloquence is seeming prudence to the extent that it is about the subject matter of prudence.

* * * *

I haven't said anything, and do not intend to say much, about what consequences my argument would have for how writing is taught, but have instead concentrated on trying to demonstrate the plausibility of teaching virtue through teaching writing. That claim has an outrageous sound to it, but I think there is a sensible, practicable meaning if the initial shock passes. First, the idea of teaching virtue, or goodness, seems an invasion of privacy, but I think that appearance is simply based on a version of morality to which there are more interesting alternatives. Second, to say that prudence or practical reason is acquired through training in eloquence sounds less ambitious and offensive than talking about virtue in general — courage in battle and fortitude in the face of temptations are not obviously connected to eloquence. Third, and I think most important, teaching virtue through teaching eloquence does not mean producing students who will go on and perform good deeds — students do not become virtuous *by* writing well, but develop and practice virtue *in* writing well. Practical reason and prudence are traditional names that describe the ability I have been focusing on, the ability required to take general values, desires, and ideas and combine them with the facts and demands of some particular situation to arrive at a practical conclusion, a policy, an advocated action. If one assumes that morality consists in believing the right things, willing the good, then what I have been calling virtue becomes the purely amoral ability of effectiveness. But if one thinks that, as Socrates says, no one willingly does wrong, that failures to do good indicate an absence of some ability, in particular the ability to figure out how the will to do good leads to any particular action, then prudence becomes a primary virtue and the picture of the good citizen becomes, as in Cicero, the eloquent man.

It would be irresponsible for me to talk about pedagogy with anything less than thoroughness, and that would require another essay. But I do want to suggest that some of the traditional teaching methods associated with rhetoric take on a new appeal when associated with teaching the structure and subject of practical reason. Classical rhetoricians learned by arguing both sides of any question (Cicero said he always got up on his opponent's case more diligently than his own) and they acquired their own voice by imitating a variety of styles. Their educational practice in arguing both sides was different not only from just telling the truth and saying what you sincerely believe, but also from arbitrarily choosing a thesis, following Sheridan Baker's advice that the more controversial, more unlikely a thesis, the easier it is to write about — advice which Wayne Booth condemns as immoral. Here the purpose of arguing both sides is not to be trained in making the weaker case appear the stronger, but to discover what is right by trying to argue for and against it. If prudence consists in being able to act according to flexible rules, then those rules can best be discovered through argument. Arguing both sides is immoral only if the truth is already apparent prior to argument.

In the same way, imitation as an educational device becomes more plausible, and more interesting, when eloquence is seeming prudence. Trying out a variety of voices is not training in hiding one's true self but in recognizing that style, and character, require flexibility, that different problems require different relations among speaker, subject, and audience and that those different relations are embodied in the characters displayed through eloquence.[18]

As I showed earlier, the very idea of a moral skill, ability, or art sounds like a paradox: skills can be used for good or bad ends, but virtues automatically embody good ends. Eloquence and the sense of prudence associated with it seem to fit somewhere between a skill and a virtue: they embody moral values but can be used for further, good or bad, purposes. I don't think there are any simple solutions to this puzzle, or existing philosophical doctrines at hand to cover such phenomena. One way to think further about moral abilities, though, is to recognize an affinity between rhetorical prudence and the three intellectual virtues discussed in Aristotle's *Ethics* VI, 9-11 — *eubolia* (excellence in deliberation), *synesis* (good judgment about practical matters), and *gnome* (the fairness that sees the spirit behind the letter of the law and is fair to others).

Rhetoric teaches *eubolia:* good writing exhibits the structure of practical deliberation, thinking about things that can be otherwise, leading to a judgment about what to do. By exhibiting the act of deliberation, rhetoric increases the deliberative faculty itself.

Rhetoric teaches *synesis:* Aristotle distinguishes *synesis* from virtue, because virtue is a decision to do something, while *synesis* is a decision that

something is good, or that something should be done. It is not practical in the sense that it doesn't issue in action, but still is about the same things that practical judgments are about. *Synesis* captures the way writing is not only, in one sense, an action, but is also a preparation for action, a substitute for action, "practice for practice."

Rhetoric teaches *gnome:* the stance of the prudent man developed in good writing involves the recognition that the author is a member of a community of actors and judges, that people not only share some characteristics, and hence are subject to rules, but also are individuals who deserve individual respect and treatment.

These three virtues are all intellectual virtues concerned with particulars. That combination — intellectual but particular — sounds perfect for the skills acquired through writing. Those skills must be intellectual, having to do with discourse rather than feelings and emotions, but particular, obviously not reducible to rules or other universals. Prudence, too, as Aristotle shows, is an intellectual virtue concerned with particulars; not reducible to rule, prudence embodies the right rule for the other virtues, embodies them in something like what Cicero calls a flexible rule. Consequently, just as I have noted the ambiguity between prudence as a virtue and as an amoral skill, Aristotle goes on, immediately after talking about these three virtues, to distinguish prudence from the amoral skill of cleverness (*Ethics*, VI.12). Aristotle's remarks on these three virtues are quite brief, but I suggest that they are a way of making sense of the odd idea of moral, deliberative, prudential qualities.

Notes

[1]William E. Coles, Jr., *The Plural "I": The Teaching of Writing* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1978). Thus Coles begins his book, *The Plural "I"*, by saying about both writing and teaching writing: "Neither of these activities is something that anyone can claim to know how to do except in the same more or less general way that one may claim to know how to be decent or what it means to grow up" (p. 1). I cite Coles quite a bit in this paper because the progress of his narrative seems to force him constantly to acknowledge, in an unstudied way, the connections between teaching writing and teaching virtue. Indicative of the current state of the argument is Coles' pejorative use of "decent" here.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 18 and 22. Conversely, just as many errors in writing turn out to criticized on moral grounds, so many moral faults are criticized as discursive errors. E.g., Monroe Beardsley, "Logic and Rhetoric," *Teaching Philosophy*, 4 (1981), p. 259: "Most moral criticism or argument is dependent on logical criticism. There are probably not many serious moral faults in argument that do not stem from logical faults."

[3]For the student's point of view, see Hippocrates at the beginning of the *Protagoras*.

[4]Coles, p. 73. See also Richard Lanham's *Style: An Anti-Textbook* (New Haven, CT: Yale University

Press, 1974), especially pp. 115-24, in which he in effect deflates Coles' distinction between an expressed self and a real self by advocating "Essential Hypocrises" by the student writer, citing Flanders and Swan's remark, "Always be sincere, whether you mean it or not."

[5]Cicero, *De Inventione* I.i. For two completely different modern assertions that learning writing is corrupting, see Coles, who sees Themewriting as a way of learning to hide, to make oneself less than a person, and Labov, who sees writing as destructive of natural, spontaneous eloquence. Neither of them, though, explores the political conditions under which eloquence is corrupting. Ohmann's *English in America* contains a few remarks; otherwise I don't know a contemporary discussion of the political reasons why eloquence is sometimes corrupting and sometimes, as I shall argue, the embodiment of prudence. Anytus in the *Meno* is an earlier partisan of the claim that eloquence corrupts and threatens the social bond.

[6]This second project is currently quite popular among people teaching elementary logic courses called critical thinking or informal logic; many teachers think such a course should teach defensive strategies so that students, or citizens, can fortify themselves against the false inducements of advertisers and politicians.

[7]In a recent example of legislation based on such a conception of rhetoric's deceptive powers, the California Administrative Code now requires that the State Colleges and Universities make good citizens by teaching, as "minimal competences," defensive abilities for recognizing common fallacies and the ability to "separate fact from judgment, belief from knowledge." A. J. Ayer has articulated what my students know very well: "If your aim is never to succumb to falsehood, it would be prudent to abstain from using language altogether."

[8]For further variations on the myth, see my "Ancient Rhetoric and Modern Problems," *Humanities Perspectives on Technology*, No. 11 (April, 1979). See also Victoria Kahn, "Giovanni Pontano's Rhetoric of Prudence," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 16 (1983), 16-34:

> Language is not only the precondition of deliberate action; it is also analogous to such action. This was a commonplace in classical rhetorical theory, and it is one which Pontano draws on throughout the *De Prudentia*. Literary and ethical decorum, rhetoric and prudence, are responses to the contingent realm of human affairs where things, as Aristotle says, can be "other than they are" (*NE* 1140b27). . . . Accordingly, although the orator is first concerned with the intellectual comprehension of a case, once this has been achieved, it is a prudential rather than a strictly intellectual task to determine the appropriate words and manner of speaking. . . . Prudence presupposes a flexible standard of judgment, which Pontano, like so many of his contemporaries, describes in the very same words which Cicero uses in his discussion of rhetorical decorum. "For all these reasons, literary or rhetorical decorum can itself educate the reader in the virtue of prudence." (pp. 18-19).

[9]George Yoos, "A Revision of the Concept of Ethical Appeal," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 12 (1979), 41-48.

[10]*Ibid.*, Kahn, p. 20. "There is a further analogy between rhetoric and prudence and that is in terms of the moral ambivalence with which the two have traditionally been regarded. This ambivalence arises when the dual allegiance of rhetoric or prudence to the morally right and the expedient is recognized, and when the amoral character of the technical skills involved is judged to be immoral. . . .

"Depending on how one feels about the claims of social and political action, a rhetoric or prudence which is not subordinate to the fixed moral precepts characteristic of theoretical reason will be more or less attractive. If the realm of action is in all cases to be subordinate to the standards of theoretical reason, then conformity to that standard rather than practical effectiveness will be the primary concern, and prudence in the sense we have been exploring it falls away."

[11]This is something of an inversion of the argument of the Roman rhetoricians. Cicero argues that a good orator must be a good man, and hence in talking about the education suitable for an orator, he, and Quintilian following him, advocates an inclusive moral training as well as education in eloquence itself. But Cicero's praise of eloquence, at the beginning of *De Inventione* and elsewhere, suggests

the opposite relation as well: the good man must be a good orator, and training in eloquence is an essential part of the education of a good man.

[12]It looks quite naive at first to think that the presentation of examples of virtue could stimulate virtue in students; if it were true, then teaching virtue would be very easy, whereas the one thing we can say definitely is that if virtue can be taught at all, it isn't easy. It looks naive because it seems to presuppose a naive, passive model of learning. I think the most sophisticated treatment of problems of learning from examples is in Machiavelli's *Prince*, which has to be sophisticated because Machiavelli is aware, and makes the prince aware, that slavish imitation leads to imprudent action; imprudent because it depends on a rigid rather than flexible rule, and therefore is not autonomous. Machiavelli's achievement is to show the prince how to learn through emulation by making such use of the great examples of the past analogous to the orator's using examples to discover and prove a case. In other words, Machiavelli recognizes that teaching virtue doesn't just mean using reading about great examples or learning how to speak persuasively as means, as stimuli which lead to becoming virtuous; he recognizes that the connection has to be much tighter than that, that the prince becomes virtuous in becoming something analogous to a good speaker, someone who can use the materials of good examples to make a persuasive case. Thus on the basis of Machiavelli we can say not only that writing becomes a moral act, but that acting prudently becomes a rhetorical act.

Learning virtue through being presented with virtuous examples need not, then, be as naive as it sounds. I have explored Machiavelli's teaching by example, and his teaching prudence, in detail in "Machiavelli's *Prince*: A Neglected Rhetorical Classic," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 17 (July, 1980), and in "Machiavelli's *Prince* and the Politics of Invention," delivered at the Third International Society for the History of Rhetoric Conference, Madison, Wisconsin, April, 1981.

[13]The idea that moral problems consist in people believing in the wrong things is one of the principal reasons that the connection between teaching writing and teaching virtue seems so strange today. Believe in the right things and all the remaining practical problems become technical. Thus Alasdair MacIntyre points out: "It is indeed difficult to envisage the exaltation of bureaucratic expertise in any culture in which the connection between practical intelligence and the moral virtues is firmly established." (*After Virtue*, p. 145, South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982.)

[14]Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* in *Works*, ed. James Spedding (London: Longmans, 1857-74), 3.403.

[15]Richard Ohmann, "Use Concrete, Definite, Specific Language," *College English*, 41 (1979), 390-97.

[16]Mina Shaugnessy, *Errors and Expectations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 227-40.

[17]Robert Pattison, *On Literacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 197: "The prevailing American form of literacy, while it has a refined intellectual pedigree, makes itself felt in the most mundane details of life. Grade-school and high-school language curricula reflect it. Students reaching college from the American educational system are generally able to write two forms of prose: simple factual statement and straightforward exposition of their feelings. It is extremely unusual to discern in their work anything like a sense of individual style, nor can they easily read or comprehend authors who have such a sense. Their attitude toward language nurtures their uses of reading and writing. Reading and writing as they now occur in America are skills designed for the transference of information and serve the additional function of suggesting certain emotional states that are ultimately beyond the reaches of language."

[18]Demetrius' *On Style* is a classical treatment of these shifting relations of character, audience, and subject matter, and is in general a useful examination of the relation between verbal styles and moral characters, a sort of more sophisticated version of Walker Gibson's *Tough, Sweet and Stuffy*. For example, *On Style* is full of observations like the following: "There is a sort of general analogy between imposture and frigidity. The impostor boasts, facts notwithstanding, that qualities belong to him which do not. In like manner, also, the writer who invests trifles with pomp resembles one who gives himself airs about trifles."

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Humanistic Ideals and the Professions

Arthur Grugan

A healer is a man worth many men in his knowledge of cutting out arrows and putting kindly medicines on wounds.

Homer, *The Iliad*, XI, 514-15

I

The question is an old one. In fact, Socrates of Athens, for what was perhaps the first time in the Occident, explicitly framed the question two centuries ago; and since Socrates' time, philosophers and humanists have been continuously reformulating it in one or another guise. The question concerns the relationship between the body and the mind, the world and the intellect, or, in Paul Ricoeur's language, work and the word. The question is, how can professionals be persuaded of the value of the life of the mind, of beautiful things, ennobling words, accurate reasoning, and fundamental ideas that — despite the extent of counterargumentation offered by the work world — bear directly on their professional lives as well as on their personal, private lives? How can professionals be persuaded that it is appropriate for the "things of heaven" to be brought down to earth and made present precisely and squarely in the home and the marketplace?

Long-studied though that question is, it merits renewed examination, not, to be sure, as others have asked and understood it in the past but as twentieth century men and women must. The professionals and the humanists of this epoch have emerged from history essentially unlike any of their predecessors. Today's professionals enjoy no essential cultural, spiritual ancestors in any of their professions, including those professions with centuries of tradition; today's humanists are not Renaissance men, any more than they are or could ever become medieval men, Romans, or Greeks. Although we still stand to learn much from the Greeks, we cannot do so as if we ourselves were Greeks, for former cultural periods have closed in on themselves with historical finality. Thoughtless assimilation of the past will not advance us far in the direction of genuine liberation or humanization.

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Nevertheless, the new shape and dynamism of today's marketplace and the radically new definition of the contemporary consciousness notwithstanding, the old question persists. In this essay, we want specifically to ask what meaning the humanities can have for our modern professions. To illustrate our thesis and internally unify our essay, we will use in particular the relatively recently developing nursing profession, and ask, for example, how can the humanities prove valuable to a profession working within a technologically, bureaucratically, scientifically unprecedented health-care setting?[1] What could humanism possibly mean to a professional and indeed to a humanist of our century, especially since some philosophers — William James, Jean Paul Sartre, and Martin Heidegger, for example — have thought through mutually irreconcilable interpretations of what humanism is and means? Focusing on the relationship between the humanities and the nursing profession, and aware of the important differences between nursing and the other professions, this essay, therefore, seeks to illuminate the relationship between humanistic ideals and the professions by having humanistic values speak as directly as possible to the issues. For it remains the humanities rather than the professions that move man as man — and, *a fortiori,* man as professional — liberating and beautifying and civilizing him. This is what perhaps led Leo Strauss to argue that liberal education is liberation from vulgarity, from lack of experience in beautiful things:

> Liberal education, which consists in the constant intercourse with the greatest minds, is a training in the highest form of modesty, not to say of humility. It is at the same time a training in boldness: it demands from us the complete break with the noise, the rush, the thoughtlessness, the cheapness of the Vanity Fair of the intellectuals as well as of their enemies.[2]

Three preparatory remarks are in order. First, Western man has never ceased wondering why he should be moral, why he should be good, why he should prefer virtue to vice, beauty to ugliness, knowledge to opinion. Indeed, the influential sophist Thrasymachus confronted Socrates with a most intricate question: are not injustice and vice more to man's advantage than are justice and virtue, especially for those powerful men in positions to perpetrate injustice without having to answer to anyone for what they unjustly do or say? Plato, soberly acknowledging the philosophical complexity of Thrasymachus' question, devotes to its explication the lengthly argument of his *Republic* as well as significant sections of other major dialogues. Plato's arguments turn on the point that a man's inner life excels everything external; for the sake of his happiness, the individual should prefer the goods of the soul to every outer good, notwithstanding the advantages of vast wealth, golden reputation, prestigious friends, or unlimited power gained from service to the outer world. About cosmology, the intellectual interest in the outer world, for example, and about

wealth, one of the outer world's great prizes, Plato says respectively:

> I myself have certainly no time for the business, and I'll tell you why, my friend. I can't as yet "know myself," and as the inscription at Delphi enjoins, and so long as that ignorance remains it seems to me ridiculous to inquire into extraneous matters.
>
> Dear Pan, and all ye other gods that dwell in this place, grant that I may become fair within, and that such outward things as I have may not war against the spirit within me. May I count him rich who is wise, and as for gold, may I possess so much of it as only a temperate man might bear and carry with him.[3]

Since, as Strauss argues, "liberal education is concerned with the souls of men,"[4] classical humanism has devoted much of its literature to precisely the primacy of the inner man, arguing, in multiple forms, for the excellence and dignity of the human, at times delivering up such statements about the singularity of man as can befall any given language but once in its history, such as in English through the mediation of Shakespeare:

> What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals![5]

This first preparatory point, therefore, emphasizes how classical humanistic education argues for the primacy of self-knowledge and the value of self-mastery; it emphasizes that knowledge of self, because of the transcendence of human interiority, must pre-exist and grant meaning to man's mastery of his actions and his work. Accordingly, Thrasymachus misunderstood that self-knowledge — and, therefore, virtue, for Plato — has rewards whose riches only the true philosopher, the liberally educated individual, is capable of enjoying. For happiness, the fruit of virtue, will never reveal its true nature to him or her for whom virtue is interchangeable with vice.

Our second preparatory point speaks to the question of value. Our deeds, words, and emotions are rarely value-free. Indeed, our values seem to present themselves in every conscious judgment we make, in all but our involuntary movements, in our mildest emotions as in our violent ones. William James, quoting a passage from Gilbert Keith Chesterton, calls direct attention to the normative role a person's general outlook on things, his values, plays in his thoughts and decisions:

> There are some people — and I am one of them — who think that the most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe. We think that for a landlady considering a lodger it is

> important to know his income, but still more important to know his philosophy. We think that for a general about to fight an enemy it is important to know the enemy's numbers, but still more important to know the enemy's philosophy. We think the question is not whether the theory of the cosmos affects matters, but whether in the long run anything else affects them.[6]

What Chesterton says has special application to the integration of humanistic values into the formal education and the empirical, operative work of professionals. It goes without saying that professionals in business, engineering, medicine, and nursing should master the techniques and practices of their fields. Not many of us would dispute the professional's responsibility to know what pertains to his or her profession. All of us want accountants who can negotiate the intricacies of numbers and finance; engineers who can skillfully design and construct useful and safe dams, bridges, and high-rise apartment buildings; physicians who understand all there is to be known about our disease and who are able to use whatever technology, medicine, or procedure can cure us effectively; and nurses who monitor our illness and enhance our recovery with precision and objectivity.

Yet Chesterton's thesis needs to be addressed, too; for although an individual's philosophy will not provide him with the concrete, factual knowledge of his field, it will define his relationship to that knowledge. It will incline him to study more or less, use his information for better or for ill, establish fair or unfair charges for his services, treat his clients or patients with justice and compassion or with injustice and cruelty. A professional's personal philosophy, therefore, remains unquestionably normative. And that which deals with the normative should not be lost from sight as the professional goes about his or her professional work. It has been one of the curious marks of humanistic education that the normative is precisely what it recognizes as decisive. For that reason, education has always given express, unembarrassed, careful attention to normative values. It is possible that James and Chesterton are correct; if they are, then liberal education will present itself as a necessity to the professional whose professional life is a high personal value.

Our third preparatory remark flows from the second one. In our time, questions about the professions lead inevitably to questions about that peculiar kind of education that prepares the professional for his or her work. "College graduates" is not coterminous with "liberally, humanistically educated men and women," because professional preparation is not the same as liberal education. The significance of this distinction has not escaped the analyses of humanists. José Ortega y Gasset, for instance, argues that although colleges should produce professional graduates, they should also take special measures which see to their graduates' receiving an adequate education in culture.[7] Moreover,

Ralph Waldo Emerson questions the legitimacy and validity of anything like a professional education and renders problematic the compatibility of humanistic and professional educations:

> Of course, there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office — to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us, when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame.[8]

Additionally, interpreting John Stuart Mill's reflections on the connection between classical education and high-level political legislation and administration, Strauss distinguishes bureaucrats from civil servants in such a way as to shed valuable light on Ortega's and on Emerson's concerns. The specific difference between civil servants and bureaucrats is that "the civil servant is a liberally educated man whose liberal education affects him decisively in the performance of his duties."[9] And like Ortega and Emerson, Strauss argues for curricular reform and responsibility:

> What I have in mind are changes less in the subjects taught than in the emphasis and in the approach: whatever broadens and deepens the understanding should be more encouraged than what in the best case cannot as such produce more than narrow and unprincipled efficiency.[10]

We want to make a direct translation of Strauss' thought from politics to the professions in general, and suggest that the good professional is not necessarily the most technically adept one, even though technical virtuosity, all other things being equal, is necessary and praiseworthy. We suggest that the good professional is the one who is liberally educated, whose liberal education affects him or her decisively in the performance of professional duties.

II

What have these preparatory remarks to do with our original question about the humanities and the professions? The liberal arts are what pre-eminently teach individuals how to discriminate, analyze, judge, synthesize, evaluate. Capable of such teaching, the liberal arts can, to use Democritus' formulation, transform man, and in transforming him make his nature.[11] The liberal arts offer professionals the invitation to become more than *apparatchiks*, successful, efficient functionaries; to raise themselves; to excel at their professional obligations; and even perhaps at times to push their work with imagination and courage and reason beyond the limits of good, sound professionalism — into, possibly, artistic professionalism. Our view in this essay

is that a humanistic education is efficacious; that the student who approaches it with discipline, ability, and proper receptivity will derive personal and professional advantages from his or her studies; that Thrasymachus was wrong and Socrates was correct to think that wealth does not bring goodness and virtue, but that virtue brings wealth and every other good to man and to his community.

Let us now look more closely at this issue. The tradition of humanistic education has stated its ideal, nature, and purpose in manifold ways.[12] One version that is particularly useful to our present purposes is the four-fold ideal of classical humanistic education which John Courtney Murray, S.J., offers in his essay "On the Future of Humanistic Education."[13] Murray articulates this four-fold idea as a power of diction, a view of reality, a set of values (aesthetic and moral), and a sense of style. We will take each ideal in turn.

The Power of Diction

Murray, interpreting Quintilian, understands the power of diction in this way:

> Diction in this sense means command of words, the ability to find in language the exact equivalent of the thought in mind, and the further quality of fluency. Diction, however, also includes the capacity to order discourse with a sense of logic and thus endow it with force, and to compose discourse with the care that issues in elegance, which is a thing of restraint, propriety, polish, grace. This art of utterance stands highest in the order of the skills which education seeks to develop.[14]

The humanistic power of speech readies the professional to inhabit the universe of words, of clear, exact, demonstrative words, of words that work to unify people in conversation and understanding. In particular, the humanistically educated nurse can function as a translator — a task Murray sees the humanist undertaking in the political order — between patients and physicians, patients and machinery, and patients and their afflictions. The nurse can make intelligible to patients the often arcane and frightening languages of technology, science, pharmacology, and nursing itself; he or she can dispel unfounded fears a patient might fall victim to and enhance a patient's self-confidence, autonomy, and will-to-persevere. What Murray says of the humanist can apply to professionals at large and to the nurse in a special way: the humanist, the man of diction, who is in command of all the forms of literary art, from the learned essay to the light theater-piece, and who is also the "good man speaking skillfully," should somehow let us know what is in store for us — in some more responsible ways than by scary stories of unsafe fail-safe systems.[15]

This high-order ability to communicate adds something radically liberating, humanitarian to a professional's specific work or practice. For precise, sensitive,

truthful communication serves the personal and professional good of the professional and the common good of us all. Specifically, two dimensions of nursing professionalism are especially served by humanistic involvement with authentic, revelatory speech. First, nurses think of themselves as guardians of patients as well as of the public, protecting them against, as the 1976 American Nurses' Association's *Code for Nurses* says in its interpretive point 3.1, "any instances of incompetent, unethical, or illegal practice(s) by any member of the health care team or the health care system itself, or any action on the part of others that is prejudicial to the client's best interests." In this protecting role, the nurse assumes the responsibilities of the patient advocate, pleads the patient's cause, defends all patients against whatever or whoever in the health-care system makes any unjust aggressive movements against them. But advocates are essentially verbal: talkers, speakers, and listeners, they plead and defend with words, grammar, logic, persuasion, argument. Substantial, successful observance of nursing's professional commitments to patient advocacy appears to depend markedly on what is pre-codical or a-codical. In particular, high-toned patient advocacy necessitates garrulous, loquacious abilities, the art of communication, the talent for expression, arts and abilities which a liberal education alone, or at least best, can provide.

Second, nurses are growing increasingly aware that patients ask them many questions they do not ask their physicians; as a result, nurses have begun to understand and respond to obligations accruing to their mediating position. And that awareness, in turn, has convinced them of the gravity of their responsibilities in assuring that something as crucial as informed consent, for example, in fact materializes. [16] Obligations to patients requiring help to fashion valid informed consents are pervasively verbal and can be discharged best by nurses who remain open to the power of diction which traditional humanistic education fosters. For speech, the power to communicate in this broad humanistic sense, derives from the mainstream of classical education and offers itself to the nurse as an irreplaceable caryatid for fulfilling one of nursing's most serious codical obligations.

View of Reality

When an individual talks, if he or she is to avoid the dilettantism of the skilled speaker rhapsodizing about insignificant matters, giving voice to idle chatter only, he or she should talk about something that needs talking about. In *Crime and Punishment,* Razumikhin, Raskolnikov's loyal friend, embroiled in charged conversation about the merits and faults of the official suspicions that Raskolnikov has murdered two women, gives irritated response to what he takes to be unfounded and carelessly *because thoughtlessly* articulated interpretations of Raskolnikov's guilt. While his friendship for Raskolnikov

obstructs a dispassionate view of the police's evidence, his vexatious denunciation of their use of words which truth does not legitimate and justice does not warrant deserves careful, frequent meditation:

> You know what's most irritating about this whole business? It isn't that they talk nonsense. You can always forgive somebody talking nonsense. We all have a soft spot in our hearts for somebody who talks nonsense, and there's a kind of nonsense that leads to sense. No, what's shameful is this. They talk nonsense and worship their own nonsense.[17]

Classical humanism argues that what is being spoken of, in keeping with high oratorical standards, be worth the effort of utterance in the first place. Great oratory about nonsense is not its ideal. Rather, humanism's ideal is a great speaker speaking about great things, a good person speaking great thoughts. Claptrap, canard, cavel, cliches, lies, cant, newspeak, fustian, preciosity — in the spoken or the written word — work corrosively against the formation or maintenance of humanistic values in the individual whose utterances take their shape. The bond between speech and thought ought not to be broken. For words are integrated with thoughts, and vitally connected to things, the world, human beings, and reality. Our speech should be about those things, accordingly, which Mill says are worth thinking correctly about.

Furthermore, our speech both discovers and creates meaning; and as it does so, it finds itself inextricably tied up with precisely those thoughts that constitute our view of reality. For although it is arguable to think that meaning does not significantly exist independently of language, it is also reasonable to endorse the view that meaning is something inherently linguistic. The extent to which this thesis is accurate argues for an intimate connection between the first ideal of classical humanistic education, a power of diction, and the second one, a view of reality. In the first place, it is exactly our view of things that gets defined by and expressed in and by words; and, in the second place, it is exactly our words that get shaped and transformed by our views. "Diction" and "view" seem to sustain a mutually formative relationship, and cannot readily be discussed in full abstraction from each other.[18]

The importance of the intertwining of diction and views warrants as complete a study as possible of speech, language, thought, and their differences. For speaking shapes thoughts, and thoughts are what constitute a view. Granting a view's connection to language, we ask, what specifically is a view? How does the history of classical education understand views? Speaking for that history, Murray says that a view is what a well-educated humanist has in mind; it is a *Weltanschauung*. And it is exactly this view of reality, he says, that stands in need of utterance:

> To achieve a view requires a certain comprehensiveness and versatility of intellect, a command over the mind's full range of powers, the faculty of entering with comparative ease into any subject of thought, the active power of insight that prompts one to ask the right questions, a flexibility of intelligence that enables one to assume a variety of viewpoints, the capacity to grasp the relations between things and to throw them into system.[19]

Behind all we do, wrapped up with all we say, is our view; and, as Chesterton said, our view makes not just one harmless difference among others but rather all the difference. Our view amounts to that intellectual understanding of the order and the intelligibility of things, of their uniqueness as well as their sameness, of their miraculous ability to provoke our wonder and stimulate our desire to interrogate and understand. Views are unavoidably abstract, distant. Yet removed from the concrete work of professionals as they necessarily must be, such views never quite distance themselves beyond all practicable approach or relevancy. In their work, professionals find themselves confronted with numerous opportunities to express or to rely on their views of reality, for they can no more liberate themselves from their views or ignore the presence of views than they can divest themselves of their shadow or their past.

Therefore, what present themselves to the nursing professional, for instance, at first as baffling medical or nursing questions, at times might betray that their inscrutable facet derives elsewhere than from the finitude of medical or nursing abilities. Indeed, in order even to recognize that certain trans-medical meanings or transcendental elements inhabit some nursing situations, the nurse must be in intellectual possession of a comprehensive, relatively deep-going view of reality that precedes or transcends the limits of professional nursing categories, thought-patterns, and principles, and that classical humanistic education can alone make possible. This issue requires some examination.

Tolstoy, Rilke, Yeats, Dostoyevsky, and Whitman offer impregnable evidence that there is more to pain, suffering, life, and death than the most sophisticated medical and nursing ideas can account for. Nowhere do these writers and poets dispute the findings of scientific medicine and nursing. Rather, they offer a view of reality within which nonmedical, nonnursing interpretations of pain, suffering, life, and death enjoy rightful authority. The meaning of something like suffering can be had outside medicine and nursing. To think otherwise would be to usher in a resurgence of scientism, the claim that access to truth, value, meaning is unavailable to nonscientific investigations. The history of humanistic education — especially since the nineteenth century — has found most serious fault with scientism; William James, for example, explicitly gainsays the claims of scientism by arguing the deficiency of the

conviction that vetoes as absurd what resists scientific, rational analysis: "A rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if those kinds of truth were really there, would be an irrational rule."[20]

Let us offer two examples. First, throughout their careers nurses are exposed to the spectacle of human defacement, malformation, mutilation, and grotesqueness. Often — at times temporarily, at other times permanently —pain, suffering, and disease transform beautiful men and women into unrecognizably malodorous, hideous looking patients; and if their afflictions are irremediable, their beauty and normalcy will never return. Nurses have at their disposal definite medical procedures that are designed to treat and care for such inexpressibly unfortunate people, and no argument is needed to demonstrate the inestimable worth of such care. However, for a liberally educated nurse whose liberal education is having some important say in nursing care, such disease-metamorphosed patients might provoke more than only the necessary nursing care responses. These patients might also function as catalysts to reflection. Sickness, to the nurse liberally educated in a view of reality, can become emblematic, transcendental, powerful. For example, Daniel Maguire argues that there can be "a redemptive value to suffering"; that a patient could, if he so chose, "see his plight as a vocation"; that "the gravely ill with their unique credentials could do more . . . than they realize":

> By working creatively with politicians, national health organizations, medical and legal societies, news media, writers, etc. — and in ways as yet unthought of which their healthy imaginations will bring forth — the lobby of the dying and the gravely ill could become a healing force in society. Man's nature is still so barbarous that the well attend more to the well than to the sick. Great obligations, therefore, devolve upon the sick. The well need the sick more than the well know.[21]

The liberally educated nurse, while possibly rejecting Maguire's theories, will nevertheless understand that at least he is not talking nonsense, that his philosophical, nonclinical approach to pain and suffering is legitimate, worth a serious hearing, and perhaps enriching in some way to empirical nursing work. Empowered by the freedom to imagine and the talent to interpret, the yield of a classical humanistic education, the nurse might discover that the destructive effects of cancer, for instance, trigger reflections on the deformities of modern civilization, a civilization which Yeats in his "The Second Coming" assures us is in radical need of some metaphysically curative redemption.

Second, Leon Kass, a physician whose insights into philosophical dimensions of the health-care complex and especially into the ethical problems of human engineering remain utterly valuable, pays concerned attention to the

significant decline of "wisdom" in our otherwise matchlessly knowledgeable scientists and technicians. In a now famous essay Kass sees a whole set of questions which the scientific and technological literature has neglected, but which, in Kass' judgment, responsible scientists must begin to submit to urgent, sophisticated discussion. In fact, Kass' set of questions points precisely to those issues that derive from the tradition's ideal of a view:

> A *full* understanding of the new technology of man requires an exploration of ends, values, standards. What ends will or should the new techniques serve? What values should guide society's adjustments? By what standards should the assessment agencies assess? Behind these questions lie others: What is a good man, what is a good life for man, what is a good community?[22]

The meaning of the kinds of questions Kass claims are foundational often lies below the surface, the clinical presentation of pain and disease, and thus deeper than ordinary nursing categories are accustomed to delve. Meaning resides in pain, is endogenous to suffering, transfuses disease, is inscribed into life and death. Meaning is not something which humanistic literature or philosophy imposes upon those conditions from without, as if they were not already full of significance. The importance of the theories of Maguire and Kass consists in their separate convictions that medical and nursing concerns frequently do and should push beyond themselves into concerns which the humanistically educated intellect discerns the enriching importance of and which it understands with some intelligent interpretive facility. Using the intellectual equipment of classical and contemporary philosophy, poetry, and literature, the nurse and other professionals would do well to work on a view of reality. That work would benefit them personally, to be sure; it would also benefit them professionally to grant some reasonable authority to the voices of humanism, because those voices — at times indeed when they seem to be least audible, relevant, or intelligible — can prove singularly instructive. For one of those voices, Auden's, teaches us in his *"Musée des Beaux Arts"*:

> About suffering they were never wrong,
> The Old Masters: how well they understood
> Its human position; how it takes place
> While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking
> dully along;
> How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
> For the miraculous birth, there always must be
> Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
> On a pond at the edge of the wood:
> They never forgot
> That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course

Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.[23]

Moral Values

We are the heirs of Descartes, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton. Because their researches have unchangeably defined the history of ideas we have inherited from them, no view of reality, no metaphysics, no philosophical anthropology can circumvent the radical way in which the natural mathematical sciences have influenced our perceptions and knowledge of what is real and experienceable. Moreover, although views and anthropologies remain independent studies in their own right, they sustain close ties to theories of morality. Without addressing the question of their complex relationship, we submit that views of the good life follow from views of reality, as action follows from being, and that classical humanistic education's ideal of a view is intrinsically related to its ethical ideal of character-formation. What is more, one's specific view of morality will lead one to interpret practically what a person of goodness is and is not, and what kind of life-style a person should cultivate in his or her pursuit of moral character. This interrelationship of view, science, and morality is part of the special complication of humanistic issues faced by the professionals of modernity.

For instance, nurses are dramatically involved in the work of defining their roles, their work responsibilities, their relationships with patients and physicians and hospital administrators, and their professional autonomy collectively and individually regarded. In short, nurses are struggling with their image, their "view" of themselves. "Image" has multiple meanings, too many to examine in this essay. Yet two seem to be more to the point than others. First, an image is an appearance. It refers to how we present, show, convey ourselves to others, how we want others to see and understand us, and how we think of ourselves. In this sense, the question of the accuracy or truthfulness of the image remains decisive. Second, an image carries important literary meanings — metaphors, in this respect, being most important ways of conveying images. Here the nurse is said to be something, and questions of identification emerge, questions about whether the nurse is in fact what he or she says, and questions about whether he or she should be what the metaphor says a nurse is.

While much nursing literature devotes attention to images as appearances, Gerald R. Winslow's recent article focuses on images as metaphors.[24] Yet, however images get understood, they are not value-free; indeed, because images are views or ways of formulating views, the philosophical evidence is that different clusters of moral values attach themselves to different images, that nursing's current interest in images of nursing points in its own way to close

bonding between views and morality.[25] The importance of recognizing that bond lies in our recognition of the fact that different moral obligations present themselves to the nurse whose self-image is primarily of a patient advocate and the nurse who sees himself or herself as a team member, health educator, or contracted clinician; and very different obligations will confront the nurse who views the professional role in basically utilitarian or consequentialist terms rather than in deontological terms. Dan Brock, in one of the finest interpretations of this issue, shows precisely how nursing's concrete obligations and responsibilities define themselves with reference back to the ethical theories that play normative roles in the nurses' lives.[26] And Winslow shows how the crucial shift in metaphor — from the military metaphor to the advocacy one —abandons numerous professional and moral values and language in favor of an essentially different species of moral perspectives, words, and values.

That the professions take urgently classical education's ethical ideal cannot be argued strongly enough,[27] especially, we might say, in our own dark times when many responsible humanists discern something like a collapse of our age's ethical ideal. Three views, shorn from context, establish the tone of this theory:

> How is one to explain this deterioration of moral standards in the civilized part of our society? (Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, II, 5)

> However, it could mean something necessary to the time, something promising a remedy in an age of destroyed conventions and the relaxing of all objective obligations— . . . (Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*, ch.XXII)

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.
> (William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming," lines 1-8)

With our cultural, spiritual setting articulated by these harsh visions, may we not say that a liberal education, pursuing its moral ideal, can and for good reasons should prepare a professional to take up ethical residence within a world that stands in need of principled, virtuous men and women; and that a liberal education can do so quite realistically, without banal pieties, because traditionally liberal education saw to it that:

> the student's attention was directed to the real world as it is, a world of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, order and disorder, in which man is called upon not only to think but also to act — to do things and

make things. The aim, therefore, was to cultivate a power of moral judgment.[28]

For many reasons, nurses stand in particular need of an education that looks to the philosophical development of character, and a set of solid, clearly defined moral values, principles, and virtues. For the particular world they share as professionals is populated by worried, beleaguered, weakened, anguished, and pain-stricken men and women who not only need someone they can rely on to accompany them through their afflictions but who present themselves, because of their helplessness, as potentially easy objects for unscrupulous or insensitive professionals.[29] It matters *how* we treat one another, not only what we do for them; our attitudes and body language are no less ethically significant than are our acts, omissions, and words.

About nursing practice more specifically, Andrew Jameton writes, "The practice of nursing gives rise to a variety of ethical problems either unique to the profession or significantly modified by it."[30] Let us mention only one moral virtue which nursing is rightly paying expanded attention to and significantly modifying: compassion. Jameton argues that the nursing profession has long been regarded as a "compassionate enterprise."[31] But what is compassion? According to Edmund Pellegrino, it is "the irreducible base for mitigating the inherent dehumanizing tendencies of today's highly institutionalized and technologically oriented patterns of patient care."[32] Given such dehumanizing tendencies, and given the growing tendencies toward induracy, mechanization, and legality which pervade the health-care field, there can be no good reason why nursing should not cherish and dynamically foster its unique compassionate role. Solicitous patient service is at stake. Indeed, the International Code for Nurses states: "Inherent in nursing is respect for life, dignity and rights of man." Compassion, a virtue that stands rooted in our openness to and sense of sadness at the suffering of another, works to sensitize the nurse to the humanity and dignity of those being served.

Compassion, consequently, does not seem to be a dimension of patient care that nursing can without great loss to its ideals and its patients afford to ignore. It is, in fact, worth reflecting on a nursing professionalism bereft of compassion. In the absence of compassionate treatment and care, the patient stands exposed to at least two risks. First, the patient faces the risk of being transformed into an object, reified, becoming a mere thing. Contemporary hospital frameworks, heavily bureaucratized and regimented, in many ways threaten to splinter precisely those they are designed to heal. Disease, needs, procedures, care-plans, etc., are often inflexibly compartmentalized. In such a setting, it is quite possible that some patient's convalescence will run its course without any given nurse ever having the opportunity to establish a professional rapport with the patient, to meet and care for the patient as a human being, and

not merely as a bundle of disconnected parts only one or some of which the nurse bears responsibility for serving.

The second risk, although less frequent than the first one, exposes the patient to more destructive violations. For the impersonalization and insensitivity of the nurse-patient relationship which issues from the excessive specialization can graduate — in the absence of compassion in situations of medical experimentation — into degrading, dehumanizing, and murderous relationships. The history of medical research and experimentation, which often used nurses extensively, shows how research which contradicts compassion and respect for other human beings turns toward cruelty, ruthlessness, and, in some cases, murder. The syphillis experiments done from 1932 to 1972, in Macon County, Alabama, for example, offer overwhelming moral evidence that medical and nursing research which ignores or transgresses key ethical values like compassion mounts indefensible assaults against the rights, freedom, and dignity of the individual.

Nursing care is value-freighted. Yet to the nurse who has learned nursing as if it were value-free, whose nursing education did not emphasize the humanistic ideal of character-formation, the urgency and legitimacy of moral values will not necessarily present themselves. Perhaps Alexander Solzhenitsyn was getting at exactly the consequences of value-free medicine when, in *Cancer Ward*, he depicted the ease and celerity with which the relationships among a physician, her assistants, and her patient collapse into an imperious, dehumanizing domination:

> "Ludmila Afanasyevna! Can't we get away from this tone of voice? You sound like a grownup talking to a child. Why not talk as an adult to an adult? Seriously, when you were on your rounds this morning I . . ."
>
> "Yes, on my rounds this morning" — Dontsova's big face looked quite threatening — "you made a disgraceful scene. What are you trying to do? Upset the patients? What are you putting into their heads?"
>
> "What was I trying to do?" He spoke without heat but emphatically, as Dontsova had. He sat up, his back firm against the back of the chair. "I simply wanted to remind you of my right to dispose of my own life. A man can dispose of his own life, can't he? You agree I have that right?"
>
> Dontsova looked down at his colorless, winding scar and was silent. Kostoglotov developed his point:
>
> "You see, you start from a completely false position. No sooner does a patient come to you than you begin to do all his thinking for

> him. After that, the thinking's done by your standing orders, your five-minute conferences, your program, your plan and the honor of your medical department. And once again I become a grain of sand, just as I was in the camp. Once again nothing *depends* on me."[33]

Solzhenitsyn suggests that patients are principally men and women, human beings with inalienable worth, authentic autonomy, inviolable rights; and that no health professional's treatment of a patient should lose sight of the patient's basic humanity, the health professional's most benevolent motives or the unquestionably beneficent consequences of her treatments notwithstanding. In particular, nurses, as Stanley writes, "must be concerned with preserving the dignity and integrity of the person amid specialization, fragmentation, automation, and bureaucratization,"[34] no matter what the circumstances or the nature of the nursing work. Open-minded, protracted study of the liberal arts —in particular, of ethics[35] — will perhaps provide the finest means of cultivating the nurse's moral perceptions, emotions, and intelligence, those human talents needed to recognize and acknowledge, with a civilized, conscientious disposition, the intrinsic worthiness of those to whom professional ideals call the nurse to administer. Nursing ideals make great cases for nursing ethics, and for the no-nonsense, sophisticated incorporation of humanistic values and ideals into the marrow of nursing education and professionalism. Indeed, Leah Curtin, a prominent nurse educator, argues that the very existence of nursing as a health science is a direct function of the existence of the prior science of ethics:

> The end or purpose of nursing is the well-being of other people. This end is not a scientific end; it is a moral end. . . . The wise and humane application of knowledge and skill comprises the art of nursing. *Therefore, nursing is a moral art.* Nursing science serves this art and nursing would not be possible without this science.[36]

Aesthetic Values

In his essay, "The Study of Mathematics," Bertrand Russell raises interesting questions:

> In regard to every form of human activity it is necessary that the question should be asked from time to time, What is its purpose and ideal? In what way does it contribute to the beauty of human existence?[37]

Russell's question can be put to students of any discipline and to professionals following any career. We put it to nursing by asking, how does nursing beautify the world? This is a question of aesthetics. However, aesthetics presents a curiously difficult question to investigate within the limits of our focus on nursing and the humanities. Like other professionals, the nurse should value beauty

over ugliness; and like other professionals, the nurse has definite intellectual responsibilities: to value certain but not all artworks simply because they are beautiful; to distinguish beauty and taste; to discriminate between subjective and objective definitions of art and beauty; to hold to account whoever — artists, art critics, philosophers of art, the public — speaks or writes of art, demanding clarity of definitions and justifications for judgments.

Yet there appears to be nothing specifically different about the nurse's relationship to or study of art. There appears to be no direct way to render art and nursing corelevant. Let us, therefore, make one suggestion. Benjamin DeMott, for whom the transition from art to morality is exactly what is most problematic, contributes something important. His interpretive reading of Hardy's "The Slow Nature" provokes the question, "What is taking place within another human creature?"[38] And his moral argument for the humanities posits that the work to close the separation between art and moral conduct stands to be improved "if, at the moment of challenge one knows how to imagine, how to construct a situation and an interiority as it exists for another, how to work seriously and patiently inward."[39]

The ANA's *Code for Nurses* requires that the nurse provide "services with respect for human dignity and the uniqueness of the client unrestricted by considerations of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems." Could we not say that a nurse would reap rich professional fruit, after all, from taking art seriously, since art teaches how to sympathize, identify with, understand from within what sometimes strikes our sensibilities as alien or unusual? Could a link not be established here between moral and aesthetic values? For example, the ANA's *Code for Nurses*, interpretive point 1.1, states that each patient enjoys "the moral right to determine what will be done with his/her person." That interpretive point is about a patient's freedom and autonomy, and places nursing care into the service of the self-determination of autonomous patients. Yet the value system of a patient might strike at the roots of the nurse's own value system, dealing alien, bizarre, or shocking blows. Those blows do not need to overwhelm, however; nor do they need to call forth censure — if we have learned the lessons of sympathy and identification which art teaches. Perhaps art does offer nursing something peculiar. Perhaps from having studied art, and learned how to imagine and how to construct a situation and an interiority as it exists for another, the nurse might indeed better promote and safeguard, because he or she will have better understood, the patients' individuality and right to autonomy.[40]

Style

The fourth ideal of classical humanistic education, a sense for style, reminds us that liberal education has to do with human excellence and human greatness.

Whitehead, defining this sense for style, says that style is "the most austere of all mental qualities," and says:

> It is an aesthetic sense, based on admiration for the direct attainment of a foreseen end, simply and without waste. . . . Style, in its finest sense, is the last acquirement of the educated mind; it is also the most useful. It pervades the whole being. The administrator with a sense for style hates waste; the engineer with a sense for style economises his material; the artisan with a sense for style prefers good work. Style is the ultimate morality of mind.[41]

Style is, therefore, immeasurably more than some etherized aestheticism of *l'art pour l'art*, the mere shell or form for some content, the mere will to avoid camp or kitsch. For — while liberal education places a high premium on the sheer, nonutilitarian, neoclassical beauty of artworks — technically manicured form, uninspired mathematically perfect mannerism, is not in itself what the liberally educated man and woman is educated to appreciate and enjoy.

Aristotle, for one, cautions his students of politics and ethics that "the prize at the Olympic Games does not go to the most beautiful and the strongest, but to the participants in the contests, for it is among them that the victors are found."[42] Whitehead's interpretation of style as a rigorous mental attribute should be seen as pointing toward inner power and strength of mind and character, and as continuing classical humanism's tradition of encouraging and honoring human greatness and excellence, wherever it comes to expression, and as steadfastly denigrating mediocrity. For example, the aged Peleus gives voice to this ideal of style in the advice he gives to his son Achilleus: "Always be the best, and rise above others." [43] And Pindar sings of similar aristocratic strivings:

> The great adventure never accepts a man without strength:
> but if we are destined to die, why should one sit
> to no purpose in darkness and mull a nameless old age
> without any part of glory his own? So my way
> lies this hazard; yours to make good the end.[44]

This concern for excellence, for a high-principled way of living and of dying, appears in multiple guises through the tradition; yet the argument for the difference between the excellent and the ordinary remains the decisively shared conviction of those many different writers. Plato argues that an unbridgeable chasm yawns when the pre-conscious, uneducated Thracian maid servant, bent exclusively on executing her practical duties, ridicules the introspective Thales of Miletus when she sees him tumble into a well because, as he was walking along, he was looking skyward, fixing his attention on heavenly matters, ideas. [45] And Ortega presents a lengthy argument for the significance of the difference

between select men and mass men, the former demanding more of themselves than the latter. No more radical division of humanity could be made, Orgega says, than "that which splits it into two classes of creatures: those who make great demands on themselves, piling up difficulties and duties; and those who demand nothing special of themselves, . . . without imposing on themselves any effort towards perfection."[46]

With its ideal of style, classical education remains distinctively intolerant of the average. Its distaste for averageness, its vigorous encouragement of the best, is due not only to its sense of the waste which mediocrity effects but to its awareness of the destructiveness worked by a mediocre man on those he influences. The career nurse who always pursues the minimum; who knows precisely what the job description requires, and who does it all but never one thing more; who takes no professional risk even when such a risk would be in the best interests of the patient; could never perhaps be faulted for failing to serve the patient. But never should he or she ever be praised for serving the patient well. Minimum service in any of the professions merits neither applause nor honor, because, as Pindar sang nearly two centuries ago, "there are ways/that surpass others."[47] In the *Iliad,* Achilleus had to choose between glorious, honorable brevity of life and an uneventful, inglorious longevity; in the *Apology,* Socrates, at the age of seventy, had to confront the same decision. Answering Pindar's "great adventure," they both chose that style of life that would bring them honor, immortality — quality-of-life, we might say today, if modern standards of quality, as the historian Barbara Tuchman has argued, were not so dismally beneath what they could be.[48]

Let us examine three ways a professional of today might fall short of the liberally educated person's standard of style. Neither Achilleus nor Socrates — nor today's high-order, high-style professional — would choose for themselves the begrudging, hollow, calculating exiguity which characterizes Melville's lawyer-employer of Bartleby, the scrivener. Their moral commitments to benefit a man they might feel some moral obligation towards would never take Bartleby's employer's small-scale, penurious style of beneficence:

> He is useful to me. I can get along with him. If I turn him away, the chances are he will fall in with some less indulgent employer, and then he will be rudely treated, and perhaps driven forth miserably to starve. Yes. Here I can cheaply purchase a delicious self-approval. To befriend Bartleby; to humor him in his strange willfulness, will cost me little or nothing, while I lay up in my soul what will eventually prove a sweet morsel for my conscience.[49]

Neither Achilleus nor Socrates nor the high-style professional could assimilate or tolerate the values or professional dispositions of Flaubert's

Charles Bovary, *officier de sante* of uncommon personal and professional mediocrity; an average man moved by no special passions, defined by no special dreams or thoughts, individualized by no special principles; an average health professional performing average health duties averagely, with average skills and average intelligence; fearing invitations from beyond the average, and, once rising to meet a professional challenge, failing utterly. While attempting to straighten out Hippolyte's club-foot, Charles, dominated by his mediocrity, causes gangrene to set in and spread painfully above Hippolyte's knee, forcing a surgeon, Dr. Canrivet, to intervene and amputate the poor man's leg.

And neither Achilleus nor Socrates nor the high-style professional will feel tolerance for their colleagues who display no sincere, interior commitment to their work. Professionals who existentially alienate themselves from their work; for whom work contains no inherent significance; who dash their work off perfunctorily; will often succeed at fulfilling many of their profession's practical functions. Yet the perfunctory and unprincipled efficiency and routine which move the work along detract from the work's quality, exactly because, done in such wise, the work could often be done better; it could be energized by high, lived ideals about the inherent dignity of nursing work, for instance. Some work deserves to be done with animation, devotion and conviction, expenditure of self, and professional nursing is one species of such work. Again it is classical humanistic education which puts us in the way of disparaging the uncommitted by valuing that peculiar element, that peculiar energy of mind, style. Joseph Conrad, in "The Nigger of the Narcissus," portrays the man with no ideals whatever that resemble style, a sailor whose radical contemptibleness is a direct function of his wanting the minimum. Reflection on this man could prove valuable to professionals of every sort and, in particular, nurses who feel that the advances their nursing work is making are getting seriously frustrated or even cancelled out by other nurses who have no high ideals of style such as classical education speaks of them:

> He stood repulsive and smiling in the sudden silence. This clean white forecastle was his refuge; the place where he could be lazy; where he could wallow, and lie and eat — and curse the food he ate; where he could display his talents for shirking work, for cheating, for cadging; where he could find surely some one to wheedle and some one to bully — and where he could be paid for doing all this. They all knew him. Is there a spot on earth where such a man is unknown, an ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence . . . . They all knew him! He was the man that cannot steer, that cannot splice, that dodges the work on dark nights; that, aloft, holds on frantically with both arms and legs, and swears at the wind, the sleet, the darkness; the man who curses the sea while others

> work. The man who is the last out and the first in when all hands are called. The man who can't do most things and won't do the rest . . . . The sympathetic and deserving creature that knows all about his rights, but knows nothing of courage, of endurance, and of the unexpressed faith, of the unspoken loyalty that knits together a ship's company. The independent offspring of the ignoble freedom of the slums full of disdain and hate for the austere servitude of the sea.[50]

The classical tradition, with its educational eye on style, remains unyielding in its preference for the best, and the professional of modernity who desires to advance his or her professionalism to high levels of accomplishment will find humanism's ideal of style most useful, most efficacious, most empowering.

III

The formal structure of the question we have been examining has a long rich history of formulation and study, but its material character is delivered up by the peculiarly contemporary nature of the various professions and by the rapidly developing nursing profession in particular. Incident to the historical newness of the professions are profound questions about the nature of man and morality, and about what the modern professional should be like and how he or she should address the complicated issues in the center of professional work. These questions are different in kind from the questions which traditional technical artisans were accustomed to asking. Yet they must be confronted. Indeed, their gravity necessitates articulate, intelligent, wise professionals, ones which the liberal arts are distinctively fit to educate. Liberal education is efficacious and professionally empowering. Nothing less than a liberally educated professional whose liberal education is intertwined with professional practice, can stand up to the intellectual arduousness and ethical sophistication of the questions that come to a professional's distinctive responsibilities.

The ancient question, the contemporary professional, and their confluence — Socrates would have welcomed the tensions in, the intricacies of this issue. As he admired the masterwork of the professional artisans in Athens, so would he admire today the virtuosity of our skilled technicians, executives, lawyers, and nurses. However, his admiration would be carefully nourished. We do not think, for instance, that he would accept, without serious, prolonged questioning, the authority of professional nursing's codically based, organizationally endorsed points of view and arguments about the meaning of suffering, the purpose of life, the value of health, the essence of freedom, any more than he accepted the authority of the Athenian artisans' views and opinions about the art of politics. Adequate formulation and understanding of such questions necessitates what lies beyond the limits of a profession's most far-reaching categories.

The liberal arts are precisely what guides one beyond those limits, and Socrates, the liberal artisan *par excellence*, would lead today's professional immediately into an involvement with questions which bear directly on the meaning of professionalism. Socrates often quoted Homer. We quote Thomas Stearns Eliot. For perhaps Eliot, in stanzas from one of our century's greatest poems, speaks with unmatched profundity about the tense but necessary confluence between our ancient question and our contemporary professional:

> The wounded surgeon plies the steel
> That questions the distempered part;
> Beneath the bleeding hands we feel
> The sharp compassion of the healer's art
> Resolving the enigma of the fever chart.
>
> Our only health is the disease
> If we obey the dying nurse
> Whose constant care is not to please
> But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,
> And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse.
>
> The whole earth is our hospital
> Endowed by the ruined millionaire,
> Wherein, if we do well, we shall
> Die of the absolute paternal care
> That will not leave us, but prevents us everywhere.
>
> The chill ascends from feet to knees,
> The fever sings in mental wires,
> If to be warmed, then I must freeze
> And quake in frigid purgatorial fires
> Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars.
>
> The dripping blood our only drink,
> The bloody flesh our only food:
> In spite of which we like to think
> That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood —
> Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good.[51]

Notes

[1]For the idea of the historical newness of many questions that today's health professionals face, see Darrel W. Amundsen, "The Physician's Obligation to Prolong Life: A Medical Duty without Classical Roots," *The Hastings Center Report*, 8, No. 4 (Aug. 1978), 23-30.

[2]"What is Liberal Education?" in *Education for Public Responsibility*, ed. C. Scott Fletcher (New York: Norton, 1961), 50.

[3]Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. R. Hackforth, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1966), 478 (229e-230a) and 525 (279b-c) respectively.

[4]Leo Strauss, "Liberal Education and Responsibility," in *Education: The Challenge Ahead*, ed. C. Scott Fletcher (New York: Norton, 1962), 70.

[5]William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in *Shakespeare: Major Plays and the Sonnets*, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948), 621 (II.ii.314-18). Other editions have different line numberings; for instance, see *Hamlet*, ed. Cyrus Hoy (New York: Norton, 1963), 35 (II.ii.292-95).

[6]Quoted in William James, "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy," in his *Pragmatism and Other Essays*, intro. Joseph L. Blau (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), 5.

[7]*Mission of the University*, ed. and trans. Howard Lee Nostrand (New York: Norton, 1966), 39-43.

[8]"The American Scholar," in *The American Tradition in Literature*, ed. Sculley Bradley, Richmond Croom Beatty, and E. Hudson Long, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1961), I, 1042.

[9]Strauss, "Liberal Education and Responsibility," 61.

[10]Ibid., 62.

[11]Cf. Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1959), 141.

[12]Cf. the fascinating history by Otto A. Bird, *Cultures in Conflict: An Essay in the Philosophy of the Humanities* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1976).

[13]John Courtney Murray, S.J., "On the Future of Humanistic Education," in *Humanistic Education and Western Civilization*, 231-47.

[14]Murray, 235-36.

[15]Murray, 243.

[16]Cf. Gloria M. Grippando, *Nursing Perspectives and Issues*, 2nd ed. (Albany, New York: Delmar, 1983), 378-79.

[17]Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. with Afterword Sidney Monas (New York: Signet, 1968), 140.

[18]We have in mind the linguistic theories and philosophies of language especially of Ernst Cassirer, Mikel Dufrenne, Georges Gusdorf, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Benjamin Lee Whorf.

[19]Murray, 236.

[20]William James, "The Will to Believe," in *Pragmatism*, 212.

[21]"The Freedom to Die," in *Bioethics: Basic Writings on the Key Ethical Questions That Surround the Major, Modern Biological Possibilities and Problems*, ed. Thomas A. Shannon, rev.ed. (Ramsey, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1981), 214.

[22]"The New Biology: What Price Relieving Man's Estate?" in *Bioethics: Basic Writings*, 380.

[23]W. H. Auden, "*Musée des Beaux Arts*," in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, ed. Arthur M. Eastman et al. (New York: Norton, 1970), 1076 (1-13).

[24]"From Loyalty to Advocacy: A New Metaphor for Nursing," *The Hastings Center Report*, 14, No. 3 (June 1984), 32-40.

[25]Cf. Teresa Stanley, "Nursing," in *The Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, ed. Warren T. Reich (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 1142.

[26]"The Nurse-Patient Relation: Some Rights and Duties," in *Nursing: Images and Ideals*, ed. Stuart F. Spicker and Sally Gadow (New York: Springer, 1980), 102-24, esp. 102-08.

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[27]Cf. Tziporah Kasachkoff, "The Case for Nursing Ethics," *The Community College Humanities Review*, No. 5 (Winter 1983-1984), 41-48.

[28]Murray, 238.

[29]Cf. Andrew Jameton, *Nursing Practice: The Ethical Issues* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1984), ch. 8.

[30]"The Nurse: When Roles and Rules Conflict," *The Hastings Center Report*, 7, No. 4 (Aug. 1977), 22.

[31]Cf. Jameton, *Nursing Practice*, ch. 15, esp. 237-39.

[32]*Humanism and the Physician* (Knoxville: The Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1979), 161.

[33]Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Cancer Ward*, trans. Nicholas Bethell and David Burg (New York: Bantam, 1977), 73-74.

[34]Stanley, 1145.

[35]Cf. Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, "Ethics, Education, and Nursing Practice," *The Hastings Center Report*, 7, No. 4 (Aug. 1977), 20-21.

[36]Leah Curtin and M. Josephine Flaherty, *Nursing Ethics: Theories and Pragmatics* (Bowie, Maryland: Robert J. Brady, 1982), 86. (Emphasis in the original.)

[37]In his *Mysticism and Logic* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, n.d.), 55.

[38]Benjamin DeMott, "A Moral Argument for the Humanities," *The Community College Humanities Review*, No. 5 (Winter 1983-1984), 7.

[39]DeMott, 10.

[40]Cf. also Monroe Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958), 575. Beardsley interestingly suggests that aesthetic experience could function as a preventive to mental illness; perhaps psychiatric nursing could experiment with this thought.

[41]A[lfred] N[orth] Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 19.

[42]*Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 20 (1099a3-7). Our wording is slightly different from the precise translation.

[43]Our paraphrase of the classic line. Cf. Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. with Introduction Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974), 255 (XI, 782-83): "To be always best in battle and pre-eminent beyond all others, . . ."

[44]Pindar, *The Odes of Pindar*, trans. Richmond Lattimore, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1976), 3 (Olympian Ode 1, 82-85).

[45]Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. Francis Macdonald Cornford, in *Collected Dialogues*, 879-80 (174a-176a).

[46]José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, trans. anon. (New York: Norton, 1960), 15.

[47]Pindar, 32 (Olympian Ode 9, 104-05).

[48]Barbara W. Tuchman, "The Decline of Quality," *The New York Times Magazine*, 2 Nov. 1980.

[49]Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener," in *The American Tradition in Literature*, I, 972-73.

[50]Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1979), 5-6.

[51]T. S. Eliot, "Four Quartets," in his *The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), 127-28 ("East Coker," IV).

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Pitfalls and Proposals in the Teaching of Values

Norman E. Bowie

Despite enrollment declines in the humanities in general and philosophy in particular, two types of philosophy courses have prospered. Critical thinking courses and courses in values education, including courses in professional ethics, have attracted a large number of students and it seems likely that they will continue to do so. As a director of a center devoted to the study of values and as a philosopher whose research is in a values area, perhaps I should be pleased that my interests are more widely shared than they were when I was a graduate student in the 1960s. And to a large extent, I am pleased, but the values area contains pitfalls which should make the old-hand philosophers cautious and novices positively fearful. As community colleges grapple with the problem of integrating values into their curriculum, an account of the pitfalls — as well as some proposals — might prove especially useful.

Pitfall 1: The "Where Are Values Located" Debate

The word value has one fixed positive connotation, but a great variety of denotations. That's the first pitfall. When you hear the word "value," you can be sure of its connotation. As one writer indicated, "a value represents a slogan for the rationalization of an action by encapsulating a positive attitude toward a purportedly beneficial state of affairs."[1] One obviously cannot be certain about the speaker's denotation. "Value" can refer denotatively: (1) to any feeling or preference, (2) to a certain type of feeling or preference, (3) to a norm or ideal which people ought to use in decision making, (4) to any object of choice, (5) to certain objects of choice, (6) to any relation between an actor and an object of choice, and (8) to an attitude or disposition to act. This list may well be incomplete.

An interesting question in philosophical metaphysics is whether the focus of value is in the human being, in an object outside the human being, or in some relation between the human being and the object valued. I think teachers do not need to worry excessively about the metaphysical question as to the locus of values; indeed, they should not be concerned even if students vary the

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denotation of value from a state of mind to an object of thought outside the mind. However, teachers must avoid a common trap. They should not believe that, if a writer uses "values" to refer to a state of mind, the value inquiry is therefore "subjective"; nor that, if the writer uses "values" to refer to an object outside the mind, the value inquiry is "objective." Such a bifurcation of the world into a subjective mind and an objective world rests on a number of logical, epistemological, and metaphysical errors. After all, if the world really were divided in that way, knowledge would be impossible. How could a subjective mind ever know an objective external world?

The important issue is not the locus of value, but whether or not values are capable of rational defense, whether or not some values are better than others. One receives a decisive clue as to how a speaker or writer views these issues by examining the denotation of "value" as he or she uses it. If "value" refers to any feeling, object, or relation and never refers to a norm or ideal, the writer does not believe that values are capable of rational defense or that some values are better than others. If "values" refers to a norm or ideal or if it refers to a limited set of feelings, objects, and relations, the writer does believe that values are capable of rational defense and that some values are better than others.

Since I believe that the humanistic study of values must treat value judgments as rationally defensible and must argue that some values (value choices) are better than others, and since I believe that values education is essentially bound up with the attempt to rationally defend values choices, I must elaborate and defend this basic distinction. In the writings of many social scientists and in much everyday conversation, "values" refers to any feeling or preference an individual has. If a scientific study shows that 75% of the students prefer to party on Thursday evenings rather than study, we can conclude that by a 3 to 1 margin, students "value" partying over studying on Thursday night. No judgment is made as to whether that value choice is rationally defensible. It's just value data. But a humanist wants to discuss whether or not that pattern shows a distorted sense of values. Students who prefer Thursday parties to Thursday studying have made a bad value choice. Or consider another example. A scientist working for a government agency changes important data under pressure from the boss and out of fear of being fired. If values refer to any preference, then we say that in these circumstances, the scientist values keeping the job more than preserving the truth. That's the end of the matter. But for a humanist, that is not the end of the matter. For the humanist, "values" refers to norms or ideals as well as to the appropriate objects of choice or the appropriate attitudes and preferences. This distinction is important because if a scientist subverts the truth for some other goal, the scientist has made a preference and, hence, on some interpretations has expressed a value. However, if values function as norms or ideals, then preferences can be criticized on the basis of

these norms or ideals. Obviously, since values serve as a basis for the criticism of preferences, they cannot be identical with those preferences over which they serve as judge. Humanists insist on this critical *function* of values.

In teaching values it is well to keep in mind the distinction outlined above. Values education uses values in the second sense — in the sense of ideals or norms. Many social scientists study values. They see how the CEO's of the Fortune 500 feel about some issues or how Protestants differ from Catholics on abortion. It is fairly easy to spot an empirical study which mislabels preferences as "values." There is certainly nothing wrong in collecting empirical data about the value preferences people actually have. Indeed such data can be useful in attempts to assess whether the value choices people make are good choices or bad choices. In the democratic tradition, the fact that a majority chooses a certain value is a reason, although not a sufficient reason, for saying that the value choice is a good one. Within the free market tradition, the fact that an individual makes a value choice is a good reason, although not a sufficiently good reason, for the choice. In these cases facts about preferences are relevant and often decisive in determining whether a value choice is a good one. Sometimes, however, facts about preferences are important but not decisive. Facts about preferences for alcohol, drugs, or pornography may well set limits on what can be accomplished in any attempt to change the values of those who have strong preferences for these commodities. But the fact that many people prefer heavy social drinking does not by itself establish the legitimacy of that as a value. Finally, sometimes facts about value preferences are irrelevant. Many Americans may not value some of the rights established by the Bill of Rights and grounded in our Constitutional form of government, e.g., they prefer the censorship of certain ideas more than they value free speech. But given our Constitutional form of government, their preferences should not prevail and are unjustified as values.

Much more needs to be said about legitimate and illegitimate appeals to facts about value preferences in the attempt to justify value choices. Indeed more will be said. At this juncture the appropriate point is that facts about value preferences are at most a starting point in values education. A mere recital of value preferences is not values education.

Pitfall 2: Values Clarification

One of the more popular approaches to the teaching of values is the so-called "values clarification" approach. In this approach, students are given situations in which ethical decisions have to be made. The students are asked to decide and to comment on the decisions they make. As each student listens to the comments of the others, all students presumably become clearer about their own values and more tolerant of the values of others.[2]

But what can be wrong with that? The situation with values clarification is similar to that with empirical values research. Indeed the first step in values clarification is empirical values research. The instructor discovers the value choices students make or would make. But our previous discussion supplies the reasons why values education can't be limited to that.

The second step is to appreciate the values of others. But mere appreciation isn't enough. Suppose an instructor of business ethics discovers that a student's value commitment to profit is sufficiently strong that he or she would market baby formula abroad while conceding that women in many third world countries would misuse the formula and as a result many infants would become seriously ill and die. Should the instructor counsel the other students to "appreciate" that student's choice of values and to urge toleration? I would think not. Not every value choice should be appreciated or tolerated. How would an instructor who uses the values clarification approach deal with students who don't value toleration? Just as the gathering of facts about values isn't what values education is about, neither is the mere appreciation and toleration of values. Criteria are needed for appreciation and toleration. All value choices are not equally worthy.

Pitfall 3: The Accusation of Indoctrination

One of the common criticisms of values education is that such education is nothing more than indoctrination. In many ways, this charge is ironic. If values education were limited to the collection of data about value preferences or if it were limited to values clarification, such charges would be ridiculous. By definition, indoctrination is to "imbue a point of view, usually in a partisan or sectarian way." Doctrinaire teaching is authoritarian and/or non-rational. But the teaching of values is just the opposite. In fact if instruction is authoritarian or non-rational it really isn't teaching at all. "Authoritarian teaching" is oxymoronic.

As we shall see, the teaching of values is the subjection of values and value choices to rational scrutiny. Actually the charge that values education amounts to indoctrination is often a disguise. Many opponents of values education don't want their values questioned; they are afraid that students will give up certain preferred values in favor of other ones. What the critics are really saying is that they do not give priority to the values of the college or university. The value choice that all values should be rationally assessed is not a priority value for them. Charges of indoctrination often mask an anti-intellectual critique of the values of higher education. Institutions of higher learning with long traditions of independence and a cultivated aloofness from the community can ignore or contain this anti-intellectualism, whether masked behind charges of indoctrination or not. But community colleges do not have such an option, since their mission statements urge close contact with the wide community. The important

thing is to see behind the charge of indoctrination the fact that some members of the community don't admire and honor traditional academic values — particularly that value which urges all our beliefs to be subject to rational scrutiny.

Pitfall 4: The Stages of Moral Development

The work of Harvard psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg and his followers has led to a theory of moral development. The thesis of the Kohlberg school is that the development of a human moral consciousness occurs in stages. At first human beings behave "morally" because authority demands it or because "moral behavior" is perceived to be in one's interest. Only at the highest stage of human moral development are human beings capable of behaving morally on the basis of freely chosen principles. Although human beings can reach this highest stage by high school, many adults never reach it. Moral education, then, consists of bringing people to this highest stage of moral development[3].

Kohlberg's work has aroused considerable controversy. Some question whether his description of human moral development is factually true. However, Kohlberg's theory doesn't simply describe how people's moral consciousness develops. He believes that the later stages of development are *better*. A good reason not to lie is because the liar will get in trouble, but a better reason not to lie is because lying violates a freely chosen principle which applies to all human beings. That is not a factual claim, it is a moral one. To assess it requires that we enter the realm of moral theory and the rational assessment of moral theories.

In many instances, a decision made on the basis of reasons which we come to accept at the last stage of moral development is in fact made for the best moral reasons. But not always. If you pass a burning school where your children attend, your first obligation is to rescue your children. Yet in Kohlberg's model, concern for family and friends is at a lower stage of moral development than a concern for human beings as such. Would Kohlberg really want to argue that we don't have a special obligation to our children in this case? I think not. A study of Kohlberg's theory of moral development is not in itself sufficient as a guide for values education, and not just because the realm of values is larger than the realm of moral values. Rather, Kohlberg's normative claim that the reasons for moral actions in the higher stages of moral development are the best moral reasons must itself be rationally assessed, and once assessed is seen to be dubious.

Proposal I: Rational Assessment

If values education is neither simply empirical data collection nor simply values clarification, and if indoctrination is to be avoided, what should values education be? Perhaps a better way of putting the question is as follows: What

distinguishes values education from a mere consciousness raising session on values? First, there must be a recognition that the values judgments of individuals are capable of rational assessment. As Nicholas Rescher puts it, personal "values are either well-founded or ill-founded, right or wrong."[4] Such a recognition is, in my view, a necessary condition for values education.

Given my strong objection to many popular methods of values education, it is essential to spell out my own approach. First, I submit that a teacher of values should treat values as norms or ideals; in their own talk about the teaching profession, they would never equate values with preferences. Values educators recognize that feelings and preferences need to be *evaluated*.

But how are values to be defended? One could begin by trying to establish the existence of universal values. Although the notion is often greeted with ridicule, much can be said on behalf of the existence of universal values. You might start with the following question. What values are needed if there is to be any society at all? Are there any values which are necessary ingredients for the existence of society? An analysis of this question inevitably leads to a discussion of the adequacy of the theory known as cultural relativism. Cultural relativism is the view that what is good or bad, right or wrong, depends on one's culture, so there are no universal moral standards. But if in fact it can be shown that some values are necessary for there to be a culture at all, cultural relativism has been overthrown. An attempt to discover such values is not without its implications for public policy. Most Americans and nearly all American educators believe that American leadership in the world ought not be simply a function of power (military might); rather it should be a function of moral leadership as well. If we are to make the term "American moral leadership" more than rhetorical flourish, we must be willing to define what it means. Furthermore, we must be able to answer the charge that claims to moral leadership are really cultural imperialism. A defensible position on universal values is a first step in answering such charges.

And aren't there universal values in this sense? Suppose you were an anthropologist who stumbled on a large inhabited island. Your task would be to determine how many tribes existed on the island. Suppose all the inhabitants of the island subscribed to a rule not to kill other inhabitants except in self-defense. Other things being equal, wouldn't the anthropologist be justified in saying that there was one tribe on the island? On the other hand, if persons on the east end of the island subscribed to such a rule only with respect to easterners and if persons on the west end of the island subscribed to such a rule only with respect to westerners, wouldn't the anthropologist be justified in arguing that there are two tribes? Certain moral rules such as prohibitions against lying, stealing, and murder are necessary if one is to have a society at all.

A similar point is well established in moral theory. Immanuel Kant reformulated the Golden Rule, saying that the point is to focus on how you want to be treated and then to argue that you should treat others the same way. The reason we should treat others the same way is found in the principle of consistency. But suppose that one were to reply as follows: "I don't care if other people try to take advantage of the rules by making exceptions of themselves. If they can get away with it, more power to them." In situations like this, the Golden Rule fails us. The answer it gives depends on how the person contemplating a given action wants to be treated himself or herself. Suppose that the way in which one wants to be treated is immoral in itself — suppose that one doesn't care if others try to deceive him or her. What would the Golden Rule say now?

There is a ready answer. Deceptive practices are contradictory. They are not consistent with the larger social practices of which they are a part. Consider cheating on exams. Suppose that a student were to reflect that it is permissible to cheat on an exam. If the student is consistent, he or she must agree to allow any student to cheat. If universal cheating is not allowed, then the reflection is self-contradictory. On the other hand, if the student is consistent and recommends cheating, then the purpose of the exam in undermined. When a large number of students cheat, the professor detects the violation and the exam is not counted. But, if the exam is not counted, no one gains from cheating. To universalize cheating would be self-defeating.

Kant's insight is captured by the notion of justice. Some of the clearest cases of immoral behavior involve a person's trying to make an exception of himself or herself. One should not try to push into a line of people waiting to buy tickets to a popular movie. A student should not cheat on exams. A business executive should not engage in the practices of giving kickbacks and bribes. These practices involve making exceptions of oneself or exempting oneself from the rules without being willing to grant similar privileges to others. This argument can be generalized to any voluntary association. Consider an individual who voluntarily participates in a social institution and thereby accepts its rules and regulations. Presumably, these rules work out to the long-run benefit of those participating in the institution or at least are likely to do so. Otherwise, the person would not voluntarily participate in the institution. However, one who accepts the benefits of an institution, including the benefits derived when others participating in the institution follow the rules and regulations, but who himself or herself does not play by the rules, is unfair. That person is a freeloader — one who accepts the benefits without paying any of the costs and hence is unjust. If voluntary associations didn't have rules prohibiting this kind of rudimentary injustice, they would be most unstable and probably couldn't exist.

Persons trained in ethical theory are well aware that the argument is far more complex than indicated here. However, my point is not to reach the final philosophical truth on this matter. Rather, it is to show how a rational argument about moral values could proceed.

Proposal II: Democratic Values

Since we teach in a democratic society, a second step in values education should be the examination of democratic values. This second step would require an examination and defense of democratic government. What are the values of a democracy? Why is it a better form of government? How could some of its inadequacies be prevented? What are the characteristics of a democratic government? What institutional structures of government does democracy require? Permit? There can be no claim to American moral leadership unless these questions can be answered and these are the kinds of questions that humanists are best equipped to answer.

Once the focus is on democracy, a number of interesting possibilities open up. Given our constitutional democracy, what values are presupposed? A democracy recognizes the equal moral worth of all individuals. Indeed, it is this recognition which provides one of the most important and persuasive justifications for democracy. This phrase, "equal moral worth," captures the popular conception that there is some tie between democracy and equality. But one of the most hotly contested issues in the U.S. is what a commitment to the value of equality entails. Is equal opportunity enough? How far should we go in providing equal results as well as equal opportunity? Is a guarantee of a minimum standard of living a right or a privilege?

Yet another set of questions has the value of liberty as its focus. You can't have a democracy without a commitment to individual liberty. But liberty is not license. What limits can a democracy justifiably put on liberty? Is the military draft, the progressive income tax, or a national data bank inconsistent with our value commitment to democracy?

One last example. Many Americans believe that very broad property rights are presupposed by democracy. A value commitment of democracy, on this view, is recognition and protection of the value of private property. What controls can a democracy put on private property? Is a zoning law a denial of one's right to hold personal property? If it is, is the denial as serious as denying someone the right to vote?

These comments clearly indicate that there are a number of important value issues associated with living in a democracy and in proclaiming the moral superiority of that way of life. If we are to be patriots rather than jingoists, these value issues must be addressed.

Proposal III: Personal Values and Self-Realization

Another aspect of values education concerns the values necessary for leading a fully human life. Perhaps this is the values issue that all the humanities disciplines address in common. What values must we have if we are to be distinctively human? Early Greek philosophers made rationality the highest value. Most contemporary thinkers believe that there are a number of values one must have if one is to lead a fully human life. One must value truth, beauty, friendship, love, citizenship, peace, justice, and goodness. Is the list complete? Repetitive? What is justice? How do we demonstrate our value of citizenship? Are there institutional structures that undermine our value commitment to peace or beauty? What is the impact of technology on our values? Of TV? Of capitalism?

Many of these questions are typical of questions addressed in a classical liberal arts education. There is more to education than a certificate to aid in finding a job. A true education assists us in living well — in becoming more fully developed and more responsible human beings. Vocational education should always be considered in this broader context.

Proposal IV: Value Conflict in a Pluralistic Society

A final area for discussion in values education is value conflict. One of the greatest challenges facing American democracy is forging a set of common values sufficient to unite us while at the same time permitting and sustaining the multiplicity of values associated with pluralism. Is this attempt toward unity and multiplicity inherently contradictory? If one believes as I do that there are values necessary for society and more specifically values necessary for democratic society, then there must be a consensus on these values or we are in danger of tearing ourselves apart. These values must be identified, argued for, and ultimately protected. In a pluralistic democracy, however, values decisions not necessary for the survival of democracy shall be considered matters of individual choice. Those kinds of choices do not threaten the republic. But general choices reflecting the low value of citizenship do.

Moreover, as we try to make public policy decisions in a pluralistic society, we must find ways of harmonizing the clash of values. With the exception of those universal values, we must consider how to make decisions in the absence of a consensus on values. To argue for procedures of this type is not to adopt the relativist position. Arguments for and against various values can go on. However, some acceptable procedures would avoid paralysis in public policy decision making while the discussions take place. If decision making in the absence of informed discussion is bad, so is the lack of decision making in the absence of consensus. Acceptable procedures for resolving value conflicts are

sorely needed. Within the classroom context, the values educator could serve as a broker to bring disputing parties together in an atmosphere of cooperation and trust so that the issues might be aired and perhaps resolved.

I do not know of a better way to serve the community than to teach values in the community colleges. The integrated approach — where the examination of ethics and values is added to existing courses in the curriculum — is the most usual means that community colleges adopt to enrich teaching and learning in this area. That approach, while it might seem restrictive in some ways, has the advantage of avoiding the sense of abstraction, and hence irrelevance, that sometimes characterizes full courses in values and ethics at more comprehensive institutions. Faculty in community colleges have the potential to give the teaching of values an impact on the lives of students. If these faculty members avoid the pitfalls discussed here and perhaps adopt as part of the values education some aspects of the proposals identified above, they will have enriched the role of higher education in the lives of individuals and of our society as a whole.

Notes

[1]Nicholas Rescher, *Introduction to Value Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), 9.

[2]The chief proponent of the Values Clarification movement is Professor Sidney Simon of the University of Massachusetts School of Education. See Sidney Simon, et al., *Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies For Teachers and Students* (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1972).

[3]See for example Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981). The six stages of moral development are 1) punishment and obedience, 2) individual instrumental purpose and exchange, 3) mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and conformity, 4) social system and conscience maintenance, 5) prior rights and social contract, 6) universal ethical principles.

[4]Rescher, 10.

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ESSAY REVIEWS

Involvement in a Legacy: A Challenge and an Opportunity for America's Community Colleges

James F. Perry

Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education, report of the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, sponsored by the National Institute of Education (GPO #065-000-00213-2, U.S. Gov. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. 98pp, $4.50); also in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 24, 1984.

To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education, by William J. Bennett, National Endowment for the Humanities, November 1984; also in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 28, 1984.

"The Unfinished Agenda: The Role of Vocational Education in the High School," National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education, *Education Week*, November 28, 1984.

College Thinking: How to Get the Best out of College, by Jack W. Meiland. New York: Mentor, 1981. 210 pp., $3.50.

(Note: References are to the appropriate issue of CHE and EW or Meiland; for example, "10.3" refers to the tenth page, third column)

The humanities are in serious trouble. Enrollments are down, achievement is down, requirements are down, standards are down, understanding is down. America's students are more and more actively seeking to avoid the humanities, and America's community colleges are more and more tending to offer "grades 13 and 14" rather than genuine, effective freshman and sophomore years of higher education.

Many of these problems are chronic, and many of them are at least partly the fault of the faculty. The humanities have been misused where they have not been entirely ignored: they have been simplified and sanitized into generic "service" courses offering enhanced skills in the basics or a brief, entertaining survey, a "bus trip of the West." Humanities courses have been redesigned along the lines of courses in racquetball and typing, with behavioral objectives, standardized texts, and computer-intensive learning, as though the point of the humanities were the same as the point of technical courses, namely, to enhance individuals' skills while leaving the individuals themselves otherwise unchanged. Humanities faculty, presumably in the best position to recognize what is

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happening and understand its consequences, have, by and large, failed to speak, failed to organize, failed to act.

William Bennett, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities and now U.S. Secretary of Education, has published a report, *To Reclaim a Legacy*, documenting the decline of the humanities in American higher education and affirming our responsibility as leaders to make the case for the humanities. His report is particularly important for community college humanities teachers because "the sole acquaintance with the humanities for many undergraduates comes during their first two years of college, often in ways that discourage further study . . . . Of all undergraduate credit hours taken in the humanities, 87% are taken in the freshman and sophomore years" (16.2, 17.1). The stunning conclusion to be drawn from this statistic is that the future of the humanities is to a great extent in the hands of the humanities faculties in the nation's community colleges.

If, of course, the humanities *matter*. If the humanities have no worthwhile point to them, then the sooner we get rid of them the sooner we can devote scarce classroom time and other resources to subjects that are visibly worthwhile, such as technology and commerce. If the humanities are merely "frill" courses, more-or-less pleasant (albeit worthless) interludes between courses of "substance," then educators have no way of justifying the expense of providing them: students have always been capable of providing their own pleasant and worthless interludes. If, however, the humanities are something more than ornaments or distractions, it will be up to those who believe in the importance of humanistic study to persist in its defense.

This is why Bennett makes the fundamental point that the humanities need and deserve to be explained — one is tempted to say "sold" — to school administrators and trustees, to legislators and civic leaders, to colleagues, and, above all, to students. There *is* a point to the humanities, and it is up to humanities faculty to explain what that point is. Bennett quotes Philip Phipps (president of the University of Puget Sound):

> In too many cases . . . . faculty members in the humanities assume that any intelligent human being, and certainly any intelligent faculty colleague, understands the value of the humanities. It should not, therefore, be necessary to articulate the case. This is a dangerous and misguided assumption. (21.1)

As Bennett points out, "we in the academy have failed to bring the humanities to life and to insist on their value" (18.3). We have forgotten, perhaps, that we ourselves were not born with an understanding that the humanities are a vital component for effective functioning in a democratic society. Perhaps we have assumed that our colleagues share our humanistic perspective even though they

did not share our education. In fact, it was through careful reading and analysis of the classics — those works that transcend the boundaries of their social context to address the enduring human questions — that we came to understand what we do, and it is through study of those same classics that our students will develop their own understanding.

What is the point of studying the humanities? What are the humanities *for?* What is it that students will find in the classics that they will not find in a modern survey? According to Bennett, the humanities are "a body of knowledge and a means of inquiry that convey serious truths, defensible judgments, and significant ideas" (17.3), the "accumulated wisdom of our civilization" (21.2), enabling students to understand themselves as human beings and their society as a human community, even enabling students to understand the functions of education. Without the humanities, presented with *"a sense of the significance of the material"* (17.2), students will graduate who "are ignorant of philosophy and literature and know and care little about the history of their nation and their culture" (18.3). Without significant texts to study, our students will not see the works that centuries of scholars, of leaders, of educated men and women, have studied, and they will be unable to understand, unable to see the interrelatedness of seemingly independent works in seemingly unrelated domains of inquiry.

Bennett argues that it is our responsibility to offer students "a common culture rooted in civilization's lasting vision, its highest shared ideals and aspirations, and its heritage" (17.1). He suggests that it is the responsibility of each college to have "a clear vision of what constitutes an educated person" and a "clearly conceived and articulated sense of . . . what knowledge it considers essential to a good education" (16.3).

Bennett's point is a good one. Those of us who have studied both humanistic and vocational subjects (and all humanities teachers have) are in the best position to contribute to a public discussion of the aims of education. We have read, as part of the humanities, the educational theories of Plato and Aristotle, Newman and Whitehead, yet we are also out here "in the trenches," aware of the problems of application.

The fundamental issue here concerns the nature of our humanity. Everyone can understand, on the one hand, what it is to function at the level of a vegetable or a machine, locked within a fixed boundary beyond which no growth, no functioning, occurs. To function in this limited way is to function without a soul, mindlessly. It is to be, literally, damned. On the other hand, to function at the level of a human being is to be able to transcend set frameworks, to cope as nothing else in the universe can with what has never happened before, to create meaning, to know what context one is functioning in and thus to know, at least potentially, all the reasons for one's choices, and all their purposes,

implications, and consequences. To fail to know these things is to fail to be responsible for what one is doing and to know why one is doing it: a dehumanizing omission.

It is one thing to operate, however skillfully, within a settled context, leaving the choice and effects of the context to others: the master aviator braving fatigue and the elements to bring death-dealing contraband into the country is an example. It is a different thing — a more moral thing and a more human achievement — not only to operate skillfully within a context but also to accept responsibility for choosing and justifying that context. The trouble is that it is vastly more difficult to learn how to function at the trans-contextual level. It is also more threatening to others, for, unlike choosing a move from a finite range of alternatives within a game, choosing *the game itself* encompasses the possibility of choosing a game that is inconvenient for one's neighbors, or inventing a game entirely new, a game never seen before and never played, yet well worth playing.

What we're talking about here is the capacity to function responsibly as a human being. "All philosophy," Aristotle suggested,"begins in wonder." Wonder about what? Wonder about some detail in context such as whether "east" has the Queen of Diamonds? No; wonder about *the whole thing* (which is what *any* context looks like, *from the inside).* As philosophy surpasses mastery (though it does not replace it), so humanity transcends machinery — not by *eliminating* the *producing* function but by *adding* the *guiding* function.

A second major study brings home many of these points. *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education* describes its concern "about the status of undergraduate education, in particular, about the status of first- and second-year students and the erosion of liberal learning." It offers a long list of "warning signals" of deterioration in American higher education and, summarizing recent research data, proposes three steps to restore higher education to health and effectiveness: active student involvement in education, high expectations including "clearly and publicly articulated standards of performance" (38.2), and regular, coherent assessment and feedback.

Some of these "warning signals" may come as a surprise. More than 12% of high school seniors classified as "highly able" do not choose to attend college. Only half of the students who start college intending to earn a bachelor's degree eventually do so. Student performance on most major subject areas of the Graduate Record Examinations declined steadily after 1964, with the greatest deterioration occurring in subjects where high verbal skills were needed. The percentage of non-terminal "transfer" degrees awarded by America's two-year

colleges "declined from 57% in 1970 to 37% in 1980, with a corresponding rise in occupational degrees." The number of entering freshmen intending to become college teachers has declined by 89% since 1966, from 1.8% to 0.2%.

Additional warning signals can be found in a recent survey, "The American Freshman," by Alexander W. Astin, published by the American Council on Education and UCLA *(The Chronicle of Higher Education* [1-16-85]). Astin's survey indicates that while over 70% of all beginning freshmen nowadays consider it "essential or very important" to become "very well-off financially," less than a third express a similar level of interest in influencing social values and the political structure, helping clean up the environment, and participating in community action.

Why has this happened? *Involvement in Learning* addresses a number of major factors it considers influential in diminishing the studying and the teaching of the humanities, such as the great increase — from 23% in 1966 to 41% in 1980 — in the proportion of faculty who teach part-time (which reduces the collegiality of the faculty and the integrity of the curriculum); enrollment-driven funding (which tends to "serve the changing whims of demand rather than student needs" and to create pressure to sacrifice quality in the interest of survival); and the depersonalization of higher education as campuses get larger, more complex, and more bureaucratic. Another factor cited by the study is the widespread lack of quality control. Quality control is lacking when, as often happens, students can earn the same credits by taking courses in recreation and nutrition as they can by taking courses in history, comparative religion, and philosophy; in this situation students have an incentive to lighten their workloads and to raise their grade averages by taking the less demanding courses.

Three additional factors merit consideration in this context. First, "academic staff" (i.e., non-tenure-track) positions have become increasingly common in colleges and universities throughout the country, leading to a myriad of three-year terminal contracts and a roving band of "academic gypsies." This situation contributes as substantially as the proliferation of part-time faculty positions to the erosion of collegiality and integrity. A second factor is the prevalence of student loans as a means of financing education: the prospect of having to pay student loans back rapidly upon graduation puts great pressure on students to major in subjects providing a quicker "payoff" than the humanities. Third, community college administrations, impelled by enrollment-driven funding, frequently elect not to offer such classes as literature, comparative religion, and ethics, preferring instead to offer all-purpose surveys tailored to serve arbitrary criteria of "productivity" rather than academic priorities. The result of such generic surveys, however, is reduced student awareness of

options for humanities majors in senior colleges, and, thus, a lower level of student preparation and eventually fewer undergraduate majors in history, literature, comparative religion, philosophy, and other traditional disciplines in the humanities.

Involvement in Learning also calls attention to the adverse effects of pre-professional accreditation standards on the liberal arts curriculum, a topic discussed at valuable length in an earlier report, *The Control of the Campus* (Washington, DC: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982). Accreditation standards are described in the present study as "barriers to the broad understanding we associate with liberal learning," functioning to "distort students' expectations and close off their future options." By making ever-increasing demands for professional and technical courses in undergraduate programs, accreditation standards have created an "excessively vocational" curriculum, and "the bachelor's degree has lost its potential to foster the shared values and knowledge that bind us together as a society."

The report makes a forceful statement about the kind of education that students need to have: "The best preparation for the future is not narrow training for a specific job, but rather an education that will enable students to adapt to a changing world." It backs this statement with some interesting and important reasons:

> Successful adaptation to change requires the ability to think critically, to synthesize large quantities of new information, and to master the language skills (critical reading, effective composition, clear speech, and careful listening) that are the fuel of thought . . . . We stress the ability to synthesize for three reasons: (1) the evidence strongly suggests that college students have considerable difficulty with abstractions and models that are the grounds of advanced study in the disciplines; (2) the task of integrating knowledge, though central to liberal education, is frequently ignored in favor of analysis; and (3) the ability to synthesize is necessary for the development of judgment and for the application of academic learning to real life situations. (43.26)

The ability to adapt to change is important because, among other things, entire professions are likely to be eliminated by successive generations of technological and social change. As the report states, "the data indicate that today's workers will probably change jobs five times before they are 40 and that they will change careers three times before they retire" (49.1). Since the humanities encourage students to define themselves as human beings rather than merely as instruments of one sort or another, they can help students to maintain their integrity through these prospective changes. If we believe we are

nothing without our careers and jobs, and our careers or jobs disappear, then we will think that we have disappeared, too. But if, instead, we understand ourselves as persons, then we will be able to recognize ourselves and to maintain our integrity whatever the vagaries of our careers. What is more, we will be in a better position to guide our career changes according to what is wise rather than what is merely expedient.

One of several extraordinary features of this report is a ringing assertion of the significance of the faculty in higher education. According to the report,

> research has demonstrated that frequent interaction with faculty is more strongly related to satisfaction with a college — with its courses, its intellectual environment, its social environment, and even its administration — than any other type of involvement . . . . No factor seems to account for student learning and satisfaction with college more than faculty contact. (38.1, 41.1)

From this follows one of the report's recommendations: "Classes for first-year students should be designed to provide adequate opportunities for intense intellectual interaction between students and instructors," as part of a general effort to improve services and retention. This recommendation flies in the face of the contemporary dogma (often called "Taylorism" after Frederick W. Taylor, author of *The Principles of Scientific Management)* which holds that teachers work and administrators think. (For more information on Taylor and his influence, see Arthur G. Wirth, *Productive Work — In Industry and Schools,* Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983.) I have myself witnessed administrators describing college faculty as employed to "deliver the product." I have seen teaching loads increased and class contact time reduced, student attendance made optional, and textbooks censored in the interest of administrative control and convenience. Thus has teaching been systematically deskilled and dehumanized along with learning. Clearly, this recommendation by the Study Group, and the research supporting it, will not always be received gladly in some quarters of academe.

The report makes twenty-seven recommendations — to teachers, to administrators, to graduate schools and external agencies, and even to students — intended to improve higher education in America. Included are recommendations for improving counseling and the coherence of the curriculum, recommendations that statements of high standards be published and that proficiency assessments be required, and a recommendation that the liberal education component of the bachelor's degree be increased. The Study Group makes these recommendations so that America can "become a nation of educated people. Its citizens should be knowledgeable, creative, and open to ideas. Above all, they should learn how to learn so they can pursue knowledge

throughout their lives and assist their children in the same quest" (35.1). This point is one of the most important of all: since one of the primary reasons for today's poorly prepared students is parental neglect and misunderstanding, we can make a vital contribution to the *next* generation of students by preparing *this* generation to be less neglectful and more understanding of their children's education.

There is another important report now available from yet another source, the National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education. This report is important not only for what it recommends about vocational programs in secondary schools and community colleges but also for what it implies about the humanities and about higher education generally. Any reader who agrees with the other two reports reviewed here will be fascinated, not to say appalled, by this one.

This report is an impassioned attack by some administrators and teachers in vocational programs on recent increases in emphasis on academic subjects in secondary schools (and, through articulation agreements, in community colleges). "The assumption," says this report, "is that more academics, which may be the best preparation for college, is also the best preparation for life. This assumption is wrong" (9.2). The report continues:

> Our society is obsessively concerned with higher education as a preparation for work and downgrades the intrinsic, lifelong value of education. Our secondary schools reflect this obsession by valuing only the college-bound. Such a narrow focus ignores the fact that approximately 80% of the jobs in America do not require a college degree, and most students will not obtain one. This educational myopia produces predictable results. (9.3)

Among the results allegedly produced by this "educational myopia" are these:

> Many high-school graduates cannot read, write, compute, or perform well enough to find meaningful work during or following high school . . . . *Many college graduates*, holding their unmarketable degrees . . . *are unable to recognize the intrinsic value of their educations or understand its relevance to their personal goals.* (9.4: emphasis mine)

The report goes on to claim that "vocational education is frequently the catalyst that reawakens [student] commitment to school and sparks a renewed interest in the academic skills" (9.5) and to say that "vocational education often serves as the glue that holds the students' total education together, making academic work meaningful" (9.4).

If all this were true, then "vocation" would once more mean what it meant originally: a calling, a devoted way of being. If all this were true, vocational programs might properly take the place of the humanities. But all this is not true, as the report admits: "Because most middle-class parents devalue any high school program that is not a prerequisite for admission to four-year colleges or universities, they devalue vocational education. Consequently, school officials often view and use some vocational programs as a 'dumping ground' for less able students" (10.1). If, as the report alleges, high school graduates cannot read and write, then high school students should be taught how to read and write. If college graduates cannot understand the value of a college education, then college students should be offered a curriculum aimed at providing the perspective necessary for that understanding. Vocational training, however important it may be for getting a job in today's technical fields, does not by itself provide the knowledge needed for leadership, for coping with technical obsolescence, for self-governance, for understanding the society we live in and how that society fits in a wider world.

Moreover, the report is disturbingly reminiscent of the origin of vocational programs in American schools, and specifically of the NEA's 1917-18 statement, "Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education." Those "cardinal principles" of 1917-18 seem to some modern minds like nothing so much as an effort to justify applying *Plessy vs. Ferguson* to our schools. There is no mention of race anywhere in the document, of course, but the historical fact is that the early part of this century was a time when separate schools were being built for children of different races, and schools for blacks were vocational. Racial differences, in some parts of the country, were the only differences that mattered. What was needed was a rationale establishing that "separate" was "equal," and "Cardinal Principles" provided that rationale. "Cardinal Principles" did not discriminate simply on the basis of race, either: it also argued that college preparatory studies were "particularly incongruous with the actual needs and future responsibilities of girls." It seems, then, that vocational education was originally planned for those students who were labeled (in the words of Harl Douglass) "children of mediocre or inferior ability who lack interest in abstract and academic materials." The early advocates of vocational education made no suggestion that there is a responsibility to arouse interest in such materials, nor any statement indicating how unreliable were the standard criteria of ability; their effort was to create places that *looked like* schools and were *called* schools but were not to *function* as schools. I think immediately of the Vocational Commission's report of 1984, with its reference to students who "do not plan to go to college and who purposefully choose a vocational program" (9.2): how purposeful can an adolescent be, and have we not a responsibility to encourage worthy — as distinguished from merely easy and obvious, simple and seductive — purposes?

In today's schools, with few exceptions, vocational programs are for the below-average students, as measured by traditional criteria such as standardized test scores, family income, place of residence, and race. In principle, vocational programs may seem to have much to recommend them, for there are, indeed, children who seem immune to academic competence yet who aspire to be self-supporting citizens, and it is not only fair but profitable in the long run for society to provide learning opportunities for what some might want to call "the least of these my brethren."

In practice, however, vocational programs have been a major contributor to the decline of American education from the seventh grade up. From easy grades to attractive financial incentives (for employment upon graduation, after school, or even during school), vocational programs and courses offer powerful inducement for many superior students to abandon academic courses. And vocational instructors, once installed on school faculties and appointed to school committees, tend to vote to impose vocational practices on academic disciplines — standardized texts, behavioral objectives, shorter hours, less course content. Until these pernicious side effects are controlled or eliminated, vocational programs cannot be welcome in an environment of commitment to academic achievement. Until vocational programs are meant as something other than operations providing for entry-level job skills, until vocational programs have as their purpose preparation not only for job entry but also for promotion and transition and for the general responsibilities of citizenship —that is to say, until vocational programs aspire to make their graduates fully functional human beings; until these things happen, vocational programs will not have earned their place in the academic environment.

When William Bennett describes the proper aim of education in active terms — "*participants* in a common culture, *shareholders* in our civilization" (17.1), he is describing an activity that must at least begin in college, and he is not talking about mere acquisition of skills: students must be allowed and helped to gain a unified, effective perspective on their own education. What students need is a frame of reference that enables them to see themselves as members of the entire human race rather than merely as members of this or that family, tribe, fraternity, or profession. This frame of reference is above all what the humanities are for. The humanities transcend individual differences to illuminate our shared human identity — our ability to care, the limitations of our knowledge and understanding, our mortality. The National Institute of Education's report adds a recommendation that students become actively involved in their own education and gives a number of valuable suggestions, addressed not only to faculty and administration but also to students, for aiding in the process. All of this must make sense, once we think about it. How can *education* possibly be something that *we* do *to* (or *for*) our students? We ourselves know that no one

ever got as much work out of us as we, ourselves, could get, once we understood the *point* of the work. It will surely be the same with our students.

We are taking a gamble, of course, when we give our children the knowledge they need to control their own lives independent of us, for once we give them this information we will no longer be able to control them in the service of our own best interests. The gamble is that as they become self-governing adults they will recognize the value of democratic, human community and join us freely in the quest to create such a community. We will not always win our gamble, but that doesn't mean it isn't right to take it. What is wrong is to perpetuate educational practices originated in places and times when citizens had to be kept ignorant and confused for the sake of maintaining the *status quo*.

The NIE report strongly recommends active student involvement in education. So does a book called *College Thinking: How to Get the Best Out of College* by Jack Meiland, director of the undergraduate honors program at the University of Michigan. I have recommended this book to all my students and plan to make assignments from it starting this semester. Meiland contrasts high school work, as the apodictic presentation of material to be memorized and recited, with college work: "The good college teacher presents some information, in the sense of 'what is currently believed.' But he also spends much time talking about *the basis* on which this information is currently believed. *A large part of college work consists of discussing and examining the basis of current beliefs*" (10).

There is a marked contrast — in fact, a flat contradiction — between Meiland's imperative and that of the vocationalists. When Meiland claims that

> The business of college teaching and learning — namely, the examination of reasons for beliefs — gives rise to, encourages, and absolutely depends on both students and teachers having an attitude of skepticism, of questioning, of not taking anything for granted. The whole project of college teaching and research — indeed, the whole project of the modern mind — is to base belief only on good reasons (16),

he is not talking about handing out settled rules as would be done at a bridge club or in a racquetball or typing class; nor is he talking about an activity aimed at profit. The vocational classes may help students to *get*, at least in the very short run, but the humanities help them to *be*. To be able to compare one career with another, one lifestyle with another, one argument with another, one point of view with another, one culture with another: these represent some of the most complex, and difficult, actions we humans are capable of. They represent an opportunity and a duty both for students and for teachers.

Reasons play a vital role in the formation of the sort of individual character that college ought to foster, as Meiland points out. Among the arguments he gives in support of this assertion are that beliefs supported by good reasons are more likely to be true, and to guide our actions satisfactorily, and to endure, and to contribute to the kind of society we can respect. Giving reasons, and expecting reasons in return, mark the human community no less than they mark the scientific community. This may help explain why an organization run according to Taylorism is the antithesis of a human community: the manager or administrator doesn't explain things if employees are viewed as mere objects.

I will conclude by offering an additional perspective found in some recent work by Janice Hays at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, in a monograph-in-progress titled "Stages in the Development of Analytic/Argumentative Writing Abilities During the College Years." What she has found is that college students are frequently able to produce "narrative and descriptive writing" while remaining unable to "perform well on an analytic writing test —one demanding hierarchical organization based upon concepts and requiring students to manipulate ideas, establish relationships among them, and then manipulate those relationships in ways characterizing complex thought." Following William Perry (*Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* [New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968]) and Lawrence Kohlberg (*The Philosophy of Moral Development* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981]), Hays describes six stages of writing culminating in a level of "mature cognitive functioning" where writers "hold their [reasoned] conclusions provisionally, not absolutely. Such dialectical reasoning to working conclusions is the kind of thinking that, ideally, a college education encourages." I am confident that Bennett, Meiland, and the NIE study group would all agree. More than anything else, this is what the humanities are for: to bring students to the point where they can live confidently and effectively at the highest possible level of human awareness and responsibility.

One of the characterizing features of democracy is its chronic incoherence: diverse intentions, most of them good, some of them unfit for human habitation, in conflict with each other, pushing and tugging the body politic in many different directions. What we have seen in these reports is ample evidence of the conflict and clear intimations of the resulting damage and danger. What I have tried to do, taking my cue from the texts here reviewed, is to inspire a heightened interest and hope in my colleagues, the better to combat that chronic incoherence with the concerted effort Bennett is seeking. Scholars aren't usually anxious to fight, but I think we should all realize that we have a fight on our hands whether we like it or not. The humanities, however noble they have come to seem to us, are expendable in the eyes of the wider society. It does not matter that sacrificing a humanistic perspective would doubtless prove suicidal

for our culture: other cultures have committed suicide, and ours is capable of following. To the extent that our culture is ignorant of the past, as Santayana reminded us, it is sure to repeat it.

Canon, Curriculum, and Cultural Literacy

Linda Spoerl

"Cultural Literacy" and " 'English' and the Perils of Formalism," by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. *American Scholar*, Spring 1983 and Summer 1984.

Criticism and Social Change, by Frank Lentricchia, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983. 173 pp., $15.00.

Canons, edited by Robert Von Hallberg. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984. 408 pp., $12.95.

In the past year higher education — its goals, practices, and problems —has received the public attention earlier focused on the elementary and secondary system. Following the lead of the National Commission on Excellence in Education report, *A Nation at Risk*, the National Institute of Education issued its analysis of our colleges and universities and recommendations for reform. One might expect, therefore, studies of individual disciplines and areas to appear as various academic communities respond to criticisms and develop or debate new ideas and approaches. In the humanities, the November, 1984, report of NEH chairman William Bennett has received widespread coverage in the general media and is becoming the focus of a national debate on the proper goals, methods, and content of the collegiate humanities curriculum.

Long before the Bennett report appeared, scholars in the field were lamenting the "crisis" in education and the failure of the system to educate the current generation of students in history, philosophy, languages, and literature. Statistical data, of course, show marked declines in the number of undergraduates majoring in humanities disciplines, and the unchallenged assumption that liberal arts majors will not get jobs after graduation (not to mention gridlock in the humanities teaching job market) has assured the flight of students to areas they believe will offer them work after college.

But the most recent debate centers not on the flight of students from humanities (though that flight perhaps has stimulated professional self-criticism), but on the more fundamental questions every teacher faces in planning every day's activities in the classroom: What am I teaching? How am I teaching it? Why am I teaching it? These questions, taken together, form the basis on which we develop our personal and collective theories of education. With our answers, whether consciously developed or uncritically accepted, we

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create both the short-term class content and the long-term effects of that content. In choosing specific works for consideration, we create a generation's canon; in deciding how classes should be organized and connected with each other, we create a pathway, a curriculum. In making decisions about both canon selection and curricular shape, we enact our educational and political philosophies; we create (or fail to create) cultural literacy.

The works reviewed in this article focus on "English," the fundamental discipline of the grade and high school system, and the only one commonly taught in some form in each of grades one through twelve. The works are closely connected in the issues they raise: together they examine, complicate, and criticize the important professional questions we face.

E. D. Hirsch, Jr., presents the case for the traditional curriculum in two related articles recently published in *The American Scholar*. The first argues "that the decline in our literacy and the decline in the commonly shared knowledge that we acquire in school are causally related facts" (160). Hirsch believes improvement will occur only if schools at all levels accept their "self-conscious job of culture making" (160), give up an untrammeled application of the doctrine of curricular pluralism, and commit themselves to defining and teaching "cultural literacy." The second essay extends the implications of the first to a criticism of the way English is taught in contemporary American schools and ends with a recommendation that English teachers place serious and important content — the traditional canon — at the center of their curriculum.

In the second essay, Hirsch contends that the current English curriculum is based on a culturally neutral "skills" approach which assumes that content is irrelevant. He terms this approach "formalism" and argues that it is the cause of declining SAT scores and increasing cultural fragmentation. More explicitly than "Cultural Literacy," this essay argues the necessity of "a public, even political, role [which previously] would have seemed foreign to the humanistic and aesthetic orientation of English studies" (369).

Hirsch's first point is that our nation's schools and colleges have abandoned their job of providing a coherent shared culture. Citing evidence that such a shared core was previously the norm, and that students no longer study a common core in humanities classes, Hirsch concludes that the decline in nationally measured literacy scores is caused by the loss of this common core. Moreover, he says that the specific content of school curricula — in America as well as other nations — is determinative in the formation of a national culture. "In this self-conscious job of culture making, the schools played a necessary role" (160). This, he says, is especially true of the disciplines of history and English, "the two subjects central to culture making" (160). Because of an earlier

educational commitment to a common cultural core, American schools successfully integrated disparate populations, their values, languages, and histories. Our schools formerly provided the melting pot in which the flavor of individual societies blended into a harmonious national fare.

Hirsch acknowledges that the symbol of the melting pot has never been unproblematical. Alongside the melting pot, from the beginning, has been the symbol of the stew pot, "where our national ingredients kept their individual characteristics and contributed to the flavor and vitality of the whole. That is the doctrine of pluralism" (160). This pluralism, he argues, now dominates the nation's educational process. In an attempt to placate minority and special interest groups, the humanities content of the school system has been fragmented and no commonly defined national culture is taught. Hirsch's article challenges curricular pluralism and asserts that pluralism, together with a formalistic approach to humanities teaching, has left students both ignorant and illiterate.

The attractiveness of a pluralistic philosophy in curricular matters is obvious: in a nation where many cultural, ethnic, economic, and political interest groups legitimately compete for a share of the ruling power, a commitment to pluralism insures that each group has — if not equal — at least some representation. The history of the last two decades attests to the effectiveness of making minority voices audible in both institutional and other cultural settings. The message is clear: to remain silent and politically inactive in matters of curriculum definition is to have no voice at all. This lesson has been learned by all special interest groups, and according to Hirsch "has encouraged a retreat to the extreme and untenable educational formalism reflected in the California curriculum guide" (161), whose primary educational "business is to inculcate 'skills' and 'positive self-concepts' regardless of the students' cultural backgrounds" (161).

In order to avoid charges of cultural imperialism, Hirsch argues, educators have left more and more decision-making to local groups, which, representing increasingly parochial interests, have lost sight of the schools' need to teach a core of cultural literacy to all students regardless of their individual cultural heritages or their rejection of a prescribed "common cultural core" which reflects values and traditions at odds with their own.

So, Hirsch says, we must restore some balance between the concepts of unity and diversity. The pendulum has swung too far in the direction of pluralism. But equally wrong-headed, and complexly connected to the ideal of pluralism, is the concept of educational formalism which Hirsch also derides. Acknowledging that he is a former confirmed formalist whose own research and teaching have led him to abandon this doctrine, Hirsch describes several

experiments which show a complex connection between the acquisition of literacy and the content used to teach literacy. Rather than being a culturally and politically neutral and value-free process, the development of literacy is irrevocably connected to the content of the material studied. That is to say, the more you know about what you're reading, the better you understand what is being said. True "critical thought" cannot be taught without true content. And understanding of content lies ultimately (this should surprise no one who has been in the classroom) with vocabulary development.

Vocabulary development, of course, depends on contextual knowledge. Hirsch argues that the contextual knowledge which allows us to develop literacy is specifically related to understanding the culture in which it occurs. As he says, "reading is not just a linguistic skill, but involves translinguistic knowledge beyond the abstract sense of words" (165). Reading is context bound and context is culture and content bound.

And because all communication to general audiences (one of the tasks an educated person must perform) involves some understanding of Johnson's ideal of the "common reader," Hirsch asserts that "a certain extent of shared, canonical knowledge is inherently necessary to a literate democracy" (165). He defines this "cultural literacy" as "the translinguistic knowledge on which linguistic literacy depends" (165).

Foreign language teachers, of course, know this. To become literate in any language, even one's native language, requires the learner to come to grips with unfamiliar materials, to become acculturated. "Acculturation into a national literate culture might be defined as learning what the 'common reader' of a newspaper could be expected to know" (166). A minimal aim of schooling then becomes the acquisition of cultural literacy.

Hirsch acknowledges the intellectual and political difficulty of defining what cultural literacy ought to be, and concedes that the world is full of admirable cultures ignorant of Shakespeare and the First Amendment. However, his argument rests on the assertion that American culture is becoming increasingly fragmented and incoherent; since "no culture exists that is ignorant of its own traditions" (167), ours may be dangerously close to dissolution. Despite the difficulty, he argues, we must attempt that definition if we are to survive as a culture.

" 'English' and the Perils of Formalism" focuses the themes of "Cultural Literacy" on current English pedagogy and argues the necessity of a consciously nationalistic, culture-making goal for the profession. Hirsch claims that national cultures develop because of a commitment to linguistic normalization within their borders. Moreover, he says, it is the duty of the school system to provide that normalization. Cultural and national development "are not the results of

natural, untended linguistic developments, but of carefully nurtured systems of national schooling" (371).

While American schools formerly accepted and accomplished this charge, to an even greater extent than the more homogeneous European cultures, they have now abrogated this function, with potentially disastrous results. Pluralism is one culprit, Hirsch argues, but even more perilous is

> "educational formalism." By this I mean the theory that the aim of education in the schools, and particularly in English classes, is to develop large generalized skills. The aim of "English," according to this view, is to teach students *how* to read (including how-to-read literature) and *how* to write, and these not primarily for the particular substance of the texts read, for these can be any appropriate texts, but rather for the sake of learning general skills for later use outside the school. (372; emphasis Hirsch's)

The advantages of the formalistic approach are two: first, it is culturally safe — English teachers can be "technicians who remain above the cultural battle" (373); second, until recently the notion that literacy could be taught as a set of transferable skills seemed true. Hirsch does not mention, though it seems also important, that a formalistic approach allowed English teachers at all levels during the politically fraught 60s and 70s not just to avoid value confrontations but to incorporate into their classes new materials representing previously disenfranchised populations such as blacks, native Americans, third world and oriental cultures, and women. Formalism and the expanded canon led English teachers to believe they were teaching important skills and that the profession was developing new approaches, even as its literary curriculum shrivelled, its ranks were decimated, and students avoided humanities classes and favored science and technology. Those of us who have been in English classrooms for the past two decades can scarcely keep up with the available text choices for the freshman composition class. We have seen the most widely adopted texts change from collections of literature and essays written mostly by dead white men to excerpts of essays from popular media sources. Two simultaneous changes have occurred. On the one hand, some texts now offer a challenging expanded canon. On the other hand, some texts have simply changed, as the "process" or formalistic philosophy gained ground, from demanding content to ephemeral entertainment. It is now possible in many freshman composition classes for students to read nothing but other freshman essays. This may make them feel less intimidated, but the price is ignorance, especially when those students take only one "English" class during their undergraduate years.

This loss of content, Hirsch claims, will result in a national population unable to communicate among its differing interest and ethnic groups:

> Our continuing failure to achieve a high level of national literacy will insure a lack of subtlety in the communications that can be transmitted widely by means of the national language. That will continue to debase not only the level of general "culture," but also the level of political discussion and of technical and economic effectiveness. (374)

Hirsch's critique, if carried to its logical conclusion, would require a shared, heterogeneous national curriculum. The vexing question of just who should determine its contents, however, he doesn't answer. He mentions the difficulties — political, ethical, and intellectual — of fashioning such a curriculum. "Moreover," he says, "the idea of a monolithic culture dictated by the schools runs against the American grain. Formalism has been one of our responses to our uneasiness about cultural uniformity" (375). Yet, he says, such a national approach would not necessarily need to be monolithic if its contents respected "the American tradition to encourage independence, self-reliance, and diversity" (376). We can retain pluralism, avoid cultural imperialism, attain cultural literacy, and avoid monolithic indoctrination. Creating true cultural literacy will present problems, he says, but

> the answer to that is not to pretend that humanistic subjects in the schools and colleges are value free and culturally neutral. The answer is to recognize that if we face the danger of cultural imperialism, we should resist it not by a specious formalism, but by developing more heterogeneous values and traditions — a theme that has long been with us on the American scene. (376)

By giving up the philosophy of educational formalism and by accepting their vocation to teach cultural literacy, then, English teachers will assume their appropriate place in the political decision-making process and truly participate in the cultural education of their students. Hirsch concludes: "If we turn away from the seductions of educational formalism, we can look forward to an interesting national debate about what [heterogeneous] knowledge should now be the canonical knowledge of our tribe" (379).

Such a debate would surely be offered, and its outlines can be logically inferred from Frank Lentricchia's latest book, *Criticism and Social Change*. Although Lentricchia's remarks focus on the proper role of the literary critic as a member of the larger society rather than on the English profession, his remarks lead to some interesting and necessary challenges to and complications of Hirsch's position. Both men would agree on the necessity of a consciously "political" approach to canon and curriculum, and both would agree that it is the proper function of the humanities to teach values and cultural literacy, but the

definition of those values and the nature of that literacy would be, at the operational level, a matter of some disagreement between them. For Hirsch's commitment is to a traditional and stable societal ideal; Lentricchia's is to a critical examination (from a limited Marxist, though not revolutionary, perspective) of the value of the cultural ideal itself. Both would agree that the schools are a major means (others include TV and print media and — among the young especially — popular music) for disseminating cultural values. But whereas Hirsch applauds the role of the school in inculcating traditional social ideals and would have its power increased, Lentricchia sees the socializing role of the schools in a far more critical light. In short, Hirsch's model would sustain (or regain) traditional social values; Lentricchia's would transform them.

In his first chapter, "Provocations," Lentricchia cites the polemical core of his book as a distinction between

> "education as a function of society" and "society as a function of education." In the end, that is a way of dividing the world between those who like it and those who do not. If you are at home in society, you will accept it, and you will want education to perform the function of preparing the minds of the young and the not-so-young to maintain society's principles and directives . . . so that they will be happy, useful, productive, and safe subjects, in the social and political sense of the term . . . . If you hold such a theory of education, you are a conservative. Insofar as you think the order should be reversed, that society should be a function of education, you are a radical or that strange, impossible utopian, the radical in reverse gear we call a reactionary . . . . The radical of either the progressive or the nostalgic type is not at home in society; the radical feels alienated and dispossessed. (1)

By these criteria, Hirsch is a conservative — as, for instance, when he states in "Cultural Literacy" that the schools should play the self-conscious role of culture making, or that from the beginning of our national life, "the school curriculum has been an especially important formative element of our national culture" (160). Lentricchia, on the other hand, is a self-defined radical.

Contending that the desires of the reactionary cannot be taken seriously and that "liberalism is mainly an illusion" (2), Lentricchia asserts that the only choices available are conservatism or radicalism. He acknowledges that conservatism "always has the massive sustaining power of inertia on its side" (2), and defines his goal as discovering whether, and to what extent, a radical intellectual can truly remake the world rather than merely sustaining and conserving it. Lentricchia would complicate Hirsch's conservative recommendations by denying that an uncritical adoption of the goal of "cultural

literacy" (conservatively defined) ought to be the aim of society's schools. "I come down," he says, "on the side of those who believe that our society is mainly unreasonable and that education should be one of the places where we can get involved in the process of transforming it" (2).

Yet I think he would not recommend the curricular fragmentation now prevalent in our schools or the diminution of critical thinking ability such a program inflicts upon students. For Lentricchia, the answer to fragmentation might well be cultural literacy, perhaps even with the same canon Hirsch would devise. But the crucial difference would arise in the interpretation of that canon.

> This sort of interpretation, when worked through the traditional texts of the humanities, will above all else attempt to displace traditional interpretations which cover up the political work of culture. An active, self-conscious work of interpretation will show the political work that the canonized "great books" have done and continue to do. (11)

One's effectiveness as a critic (or teacher) then would lie in an answer to the following questions:

> Does one's approach to the text enable or disenable — encourage or discourage — oneself and one's students and readers to spot, confront, and work against the political horrors of one's time? Does our week-in and week-out work in the classroom open our eyes or does it not? Do we feel at all times, as teachers and as writers, involved in the real thing, or are we continually choking down suspicions that what we do, and where we are, is not in the real world? If our conceptions of literature politically disarm us, then so much the worse for our conceptions of literature. (12)

For Lentricchia, the problem would lie in devising a sufficiently historical and intellectually complex view of cultural literacy. Denying that his view of the intellectual's proper function would lead to a revolutionary breakup (i.e., fragmentation), Lentricchia says that "the real problem . . . is not how to avoid being a sentimental revolutionary [those of us trained in the history of our disciplines will appreciate this] but how to avoid being professionally constituted a conservative" (119).

Having set his goal to justify a radical approach to criticism and social change, Lentricchia mounts his argument by offering Kenneth Burke as the model of the committed, non-revolutionary radical, and contrasts Burke's social engagement with the politically disengaged model of deconstruction, exemplified by the work of Paul De Man. Even though De Man's ideas may be seen as revolutionary now, Lentricchia predicts that by the end of this decade

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deconstructionism and New Criticism will be seen as intellectual roommates. Their differences, he argues, "may be no greater than those separating the Republicans and Democrats" (39), since both methods endorse the autonomy of the literary text and advocate non-political readings of the literature they interpret. This stance, Lentricchia argues, leads to professional nihilism and a tacit admission that, since the text cannot ever be wholly understood, the practice of criticism is meaningless. Thus either method promotes a "paralysis of praxis itself: an effect that traditionalism, with its liberal view of the division of culture and political power, should only applaud" (40).

If De Man and deconstruction lead us only to a nihilistic dead end, where can we look for critical guidance? Lentricchia's answer, interestingly enough, is not to develop his own new "school," but to set out the case for Kenneth Burke. Lentricchia values Burke for his "repeated turning to ideas of history and his practice as a reader of history" (55), concluding that Burke views history as comic (consoling and accommodating) rather than as either tragic (ennobling but fatal) or absurd (nihilistic). This view "postulates not fatal ignorance and death but foolishness and embarrassing exposure for the human agent . . . . Burke is that comedic master who would teach us the lessons of humility" (62). And Burke's view, far from trivializing either history or the present, "pushes the comedic deviation to normative status by declaring in effect that comedy is the representation of man as he really is" (65). That is, Burke allows us an interpretation of history that is both true and positive without being positivistic.

But Burke's interpretation of history is far from being comedy in the simple sense of amusement, because it "teaches not comedic lessons of humble passiveness but the muscular exercise of a collective will for the ends of social change" (76). The society to be changed is the capitalistic one which defines human relationships in terms of power, property, and profit, and which, Lentricchia argues, empowers its educational system both to create this hegemonic system and to manipulate the assent of those it dispossesses. "The dispossessed give their hopes to the dispossessing structure because they have been hegemonically educated to believe that there is no other, no alternative, no better structure" (77).

For all his complication of the traditional, conservative admonition to humanist intellectuals to band together and teach cultural literacy, Lentricchia would probably agree with Hirsch in condemning a strictly formalistic approach to interpretation. The purpose of the humanist intellectual is not to engage in merely descriptive analysis, like either the New Critics (whose theories Hirsch claims laid the intellectual groundwork for educational formalism) or the deconstructionists, but to remain socially and politically engaged. Citing Burke as his model, Lentricchia argues the intrinsic value of the intellectual act and "the understanding that all intellectual activity (even the most theoretical sort that

disdains politics) is itself, from the start, a kind of praxis" (87). There is, according to Lentricchia, simply no thought which is not political because there is no thought which cannot be politically interpreted, whether politically motivated or not. We should not despair, because in this way we have access to political force. Lentricchia quotes from Burke's *Counter-Statement:*

> A single book, were it greatly to influence one man in a position of authority, could thus indirectly alter the course of a nation; and similarly the group that turns to "minority" (avant-garde) art may be a "pivotal" group. They need not be pivotal in the sense that they enjoy particular social, political or economic prestige — but purely in the sense that they are more articulate and enterprising in the assertion of their views and the communication of their attitudes. Nor must we . . . assume that one cannot be an influence except by "succeeding." The role of opposition is by no means negligible in the shaping of society. The victory of one "principle" in history is usually not the vanquishing, but the partial incorporation, of another. (112)

Although Lentricchia agrees with Burke here, he qualifies the optimism that might follow from such a vision. Granting that Burke's view of the literary intellectual is especially attractive now when humanities enrollments are declining and influential members of the academic community advocate ivory-tower isolationism, Lentricchia raises an "urgent" question:

> To what degree is literary action compromised by its inescapable historicity — its involvement in tradition, in tradition-making, in a canon, in canon-making; its subjection, in other words, to the binding and potentially subverting pressures of historical force that a deconstructive projective always uncovers beneath any act? (116)

How can a self-described radical maintain intellectual honesty and emotional self-respect? How can he or she avoid being merely traditional? "Can we choose to align ourselves with an emergent rather than a residual culture? With the future, rather than with the past?" (117).

Lentricchia's answer is yes. By understanding that the past and future are abstractions, that only the present is a continuous reality, we can realize that "tradition" is not an entity, not a completed process. Our job as teachers and intellectuals is not simply to "preserve" the past (as an embalmer preserves dead forms of life) but rather to enter into a continuous dialogue with it: to question its texts, its values, its reality. A modern humanist must, acording to Lentricchia, know that "the price of freedom for some is its denial to others" (131). As teachers and intellectuals we must understand that we are profoundly caught up in the politics of tradition-making. "The humanist intellectual is an enforcer who should know what he is doing" (140).

And, with Hirsch, Lentricchia would forbid our escape into a naive scientism, a teaching of "skills" or the demonstration of technical expertise in criticism. "Specialists in literary technology," he says, "come off ethically not much better than specialists in atomic destruction" (152). We must be aware of our potential power and know that we are part of "the unending conversation of history" (160). Our understanding of history should be partisan and polemical. We enter the conversation, take our stand, say our piece and depart. In so doing we shape history for ourselves in the present and for those who will follow us in the future. Our only hope of shaping that future is to speak now.

One example of the form such a conversation might take is the recently published collection of sixteen essays on a fundamental topic for teachers and critics — *Canons*, edited by Robert Von Hallberg. Originally published in *Critical Inquiry*, these essays question and complicate the most basic decisions we make as teachers and scholars: What shall we read? Why should we read it? How should we read it? Collectively, the works address three questions: how artists determine canons; how critics, through the institutions of literary study, construct canons; and how a canon, once created, governs literary study and instruction.

Just as Frank Lentricchia would have us contend with history, face our own political and philosophical biases in relationship to our work, so these authors (including Lawrence Lipking, Christine Froula, Jerome J. McGann, John Guillory, and Richard Ohmann) "urge that the social, political and economic forces at work in canon-formation be faced squarely and subjected to critical discussion" (iv). One pressing question, addressed by Charles Altieri, is the problem of determining whether or not a canon, seen principally as the expression of the interests of one social group or class, can be properly constituted as an "ideal" for all. Other essays discuss the relationship (openly advocated by E.D. Hirsch), between nationalism and canon formation. This collection should be required reading for all literary teachers and scholars. It does not take a politically predictable point of view; it does not make the Luddite argument for canon abolition; instead, each of the sixteen voices articulates, thoroughly and thoughtfully, an intellectually and morally interesting aspect of contemporary literary study. No essay presumes to have settled its issues for all time. Each offers the reader an opportunity to enter the conversation on his or her own terms.

Consider, for instance, Barbara Herrnstein Smith's article, "Contingencies of Value," which argues for a restoration of literary *evaluation*, as opposed to literary theory or interpretation, as the task for literary scholarship. "It is clear," she says, "that there has been no broad and sustained investigation of literary

evaluation that could compare to the constant and recently intensified attention to every aspect of literary *interpretation*" (1; emphasis Smith's). She traces the conflict of "positivistic philological scholarship and humanistic pedagogy" (2), concluding that "the debate over the proper place of evaluation in literary studies remains unresolved and is, I believe, unresolvable in the terms in which it has been formulated" (6). Meanwhile, even though evaluative criticism is practiced in the classroom and by implication in every choice a critic makes about what deserves critical attention, "the fact that literary evaluation is not merely an aspect of formal academic criticism but a complex set of social and cultural activities central to the very nature of literature has been obscured, and an entire domain that is properly the object of theoretical, historical, and empirical exploration has been lost to serious inquiry" (6).

One of the effects of this situation has been to foreclose examination of "divergent systems of value and thus to ratify, by default, established evaluative authority" (7). The works studied in the nation's classrooms and cited in its critical journals are simply assumed to be valuable and important, but the criteria by which they were selected is not itself the subject of inquiry.

Smith asserts that "with respect to the central pragmatic issues as well as theoretical problems of literary value and evaluation, American critical theory has simply painted itself out of the picture," because "it has been unable to acknowledge the most fundamental character of literary value, which is its mutability and diversity" (10). Furthermore, she says, when theory remains "confined in its very conception of literary studies by the narrow intellectual traditions and professional allegiances of the literary academy," it forecloses the possibility of studying that mutability and diversity. The remainder of Smith's article develops a theoretical framework for an understanding of literary value that would recognize its radically contingent value structure.

First, she would have us understand that value is not an inherent quality of an object, but the product of the relationship between an external economic system and an internal, personal economy. That is, nothing inherent in either an ounce of gold or a paperback edition of *Moby Dick* ascribes its value. Value is always relative and contingent, dependent on an interaction between societal and personal value systems, both of which are constantly in flux.

Second, "to exist is to evaluate" (19). Evaluation is not an act separate from life's experience, but part of the process, and our evaluative acts, far from being merely personal, extend to social and institutional contexts. The relativity of evaluation, of course, leads to fears that evaluation cannot be considered "valid" as intellectual discourse. Smith simply shifts the grounds of the objection here by asserting that "the concept of 'validity' is *inappropriate* with regard to evaluations and that there is no nontrivial parameter with respect to which they

could be 'equal.' This is not to say that no evaluations can be better or worse than others" (22). It is, however, more accurate to realize that the value of evaluation is itself contingent, and its worth is a matter not of its "truth" but of its functional success with those who are interested in it.

Third, objects and experiences are to some extent pre-interpreted and pre-evaluated for us by language and culture. "Literature" comes to us in the form of a canon, its value along some aesthetic, moral, or intellectual lines already certified. Yet, Smith argues, the work of art itself is not really an achieved consummation but rather its abandonment by the artist to the world. Likewise, our "reading" of a work occurs not when we exhaust all possibilities of interest and value, but because we, like the artist, achieve a truce and move on to something else. This means that our readings can never be finished for all time, but that they must stimulate further interpretation and evaluation.

Smith compares artistic evaluation to evolution. Like a biological organism, a work of art exists successfully (that is, functions well) in a given setting because it accords well with the demands of the setting. So a literary work which fits the needs, interests, and resources of those who define culture in the given setting has a survival advantage: in competition with other cultural objects it is not only better protected from physical deterioration but also more widely circulated within the culture. Thus certified, it moves into history, to be re-interpreted and re-evaluated by successive generations.

Texts become "timeless" because we suppress their temporality:

> In particular, features that conflict intolerably with the interests and ideologies of subsequent subjects (and, in the West, with those generally benign "humanistic" values for which canonical works are commonly celebrated) — for example, incidents or sentiments of brutality, bigotry, and racial, sexual, or national chauvinism — will be repressed or rationalized, and there will be a tendency among humanistic scholars and academic critics to "save the text" by transferring the locus of its interest to more formal or structural features and/or allegorizing its potentially alienative ideology to some more general ("universal") level where it becomes more tolerable and also more readily interpretable in terms of contemporary ideologies. (28)

Also, the fact of endurance itself gives the canonized work a power to shape future works and to control the form of newly created works by acting as a model to be emulated or overturned. The culturally and intellectually dominant members of the society ensure the survival of those works which reflect establishment ideologies, and however much these works seem to question human vanity and folly "they would not be found to please long and well if they

were seen to undercut establishment interests *radically* or to subvert the ideologies that support them *effectively*" (30; emphasis Smith's). Thus, the artistic canon continually evolves in Western society, overseen by the canonized guardians of culture: its artists, scholars, journalists, librarians, curators, and consumers. The fact that the establishment canon may not have value for members of that society beyond these cultural guardians, rather than qualifying the claim that canonized works have transcendent value, instead confirms the deficiency of the cultural non-elite.

Smith thus complicates the cry for cultural literacy, not by denying the values it represents, but by showing the radical personal, social, institutional, and historical contingency of those values. Developing a canon and curriculum and achieving cultural literacy are, she would argue, acts which should themselves be subjected to the scrutiny of academic criticism.

An even closer, more specific examination of canon development in our time is undertaken by Richard Ohmann in the final chapter of *Canons*. "The Shaping of a Canon: U.S. Fiction, 1960-1975," traces "the process by which novels written by Americans from about 1960 to 1975 have been sifted and assessed, so that a modest number of them retain the kind of attention and respect that eventually makes them eligible for canonical status" (378).

Ohmann focuses on the force of the market and of consumerism in our society, looking first at the readers of novels. People buy and read novels to discover personal meaning, to understand moral questions, and to be a part of a society of readers. Ohmann asserts that the values and beliefs of "a small number of people [have] played a disproportionate role in deciding what novels would be widely read in the United States" (379). Because publishers are moved primarily by economic considerations rather than by artistic or moral ones in deciding which books to print and market, their initial assessment of how many copies a book will sell constitutes first level control in canon-formation. Yet the market is full of novels, and only a few of them compete for canonical status. How, Ohmann asks, does the next level of control operate? The answer is, through book reviews. Specifically, through reviews in the *New York Times*. "The single most important boost a novel could get was a prominent review in the Sunday *New York Times* — better a favorable one than an unfavorable one, but better an unfavorable one than none at all." Ohmann documents the economic interaction between the placement of revenue producing ads by the publishing houses and the number of reviews published, showing that the largest number of newspaper reviews went to those who placed the largest number of ads.

The next stage in the process of canonization occurs when the cut between "popular" and "serious" novels is made. Here again, the *New York Times Book*

Review leads the parade, with seven other journals (the *New York Review of Books*, the *New Republic*, the *New Yorker*, *Commentary*, *Saturday Review*, *Partisan Review*, and *Harpers*) marching behind. These publications form a network among intellectuals where the qualities of a work are discussed and the work itself moves a notch closer to canonization. And the controllers of this network are a small and close-knit group whose literary interests (reflected in book reviews) are closely allied with the financial well-being of the publishing houses whose books they review. "Together these networks make up a cultural establishment, inseparable from the market, both influencing and influenced by it" (383).

From prominence in these magazines, the nominee moves into the pages of prominent academic journals such as *Contemporary Literature*, and from there into college curricula, where continued discussion (and purchase) casts the final vote. Summing up, Ohmann states: "Canon-formation during this period took place in the interaction between large audiences and gatekeeper intellectuals" (385).

Having outlined the process, Ohmann turns to a discussion of the relationship of monopoly capitalism to cultural process, to an analysis of class and the canon. In this section he demonstrates the role of the "Professional-Managerial" class (a phrase borrowed from John Ehrenreich) and the effect of their value structure on the creation of canon, claiming that the novels most likely to be canonized during this period were those which reflected the value structure of this class: "These novels told stories of people trying to live a decent life in contemporary social settings, people represented as analogous to 'us' rather than as 'cases' to be examined and understood from a clinical distance, as in an older realistic convention. They are unhappy people, who move toward happiness, at least a bit, by the ends of their stories" (388).

As examples Ohmann offers discussions of *Franny and Zooey*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Bell Jar*, *Herzog*, *Portnoy's Complaint*, and Updike's *Rabbit* series. Arguing that the professional-managerial class yearned (against all contemporary reality) to believe that history's horrors were over and that happiness would accompany material comfort and social and professional prestige, Ohmann shows how newly canonized authors displaced the social contradictions and anxiety of the class into images of personal illness. These novels nevertheless do not produce uncomplicated resolutions. If they "thematize social contradictions as personal neurosis, one would expect any recovery to be a problem, for individual cures cannot address the causes of the illness. At best, they can produce a kind of adjustment" (396).

Having shown that canon-creation is an intricate social, economic, intellectual, and moral process in which the values of the intellectual elite and the

professional-managerial classes finally dominate the cultural mainstream, Ohmann concludes: "I hope, in short, to have given a usable and attackable account of the hegemonic process and to have added content to the claim that aesthetic value arises from class conflict" (397).

No doubt Ohmann's offer will be accepted both by those who believe canons reflect some stable and inherent value and by those who have been dispossessed by the current system and whose challenges raised the questions which have led, in Hirsch's view, to a loss of cultural literacy. One thing seems clear: there can be no intellectually respectable turning back to an untroubled past. Such a past never really existed anyway. If we are to achieve the cultural literacy Hirsch recommends we can only do so by testing and questioning our canon and the curriculum it creates. As teachers and canon makers, we must be aware of the historic, economic, social, and political questions inherent in all the works we include in our classes and require of our students. For if we have learned anything from the current debate, it is that just as the unexamined life is not worth living, the unexamined canon is not worth teaching.

But what is the classroom teacher to make of this debate? Once we close the door, face our students and begin the day's work, what should we do? What assign? How discuss it? To what purpose teach it? When we design our introductory college level classes, what can we assume our students know? What will they have done and learned in their high schools? What will they need to know and do to transfer successfully to a four-year college or university? Should students in vocational-terminal programs learn and do the same things as those in college-transfer programs? Can we insist on a traditional canon and curriculum and still respect the differences in heritage and values of first-generation college students? How can we maintain the social advances promised by an open door higher education policy? Does emphasis on skills necessarily dilute students' understanding of content? And most important, are we to examine merely our own experiences, values, and intellectual understanding for guidance? Where can we turn, whose help can we call on, to deconstruct our contemporary liberal arts tower of Babel?

The questions raised above are difficult to the point of exhaustion to answer. They can scarcely be attempted, and certainly not successfully answered, by the individual teacher. It is, in fact, the historical loosening of the individual teacher from the restraints of collegially determined curricula that has led, in part, to the fragmentation those questions imply. Critics of academia often accuse specialization of the villainy they see in curricular fragmentation. But specialization is not the problem. It is appropriate and necessary for college and university teachers to specialize. The fault lies in a collective inability (not

necessarily unwillingness) of teachers at the high school and undergraduate levels to find a forum where their mutual interests in defining general education can be discussed.

Let me suggest here that the questions surrounding cultural literacy apply with particular force to a population presently distributed among students in the last two years of high school, the community colleges, and four-year undergraduate programs. At present four separate fiefdoms regulate education in these institutions: national, state, and local K-12 regulatory agencies; national, state, and local community college regulatory agencies and faculty; college and university departmental faculty; and college and university schools of education. While some institutional communication exists between the K-12 systems and the schools of education, none necessarily exists between community colleges and four-year schools (except where transfer agreements regulate student acceptance), and none necessarily exists or is even contemplated among high school, community college, and four-year college faculty.

It is true that college entrance criteria constitute *de facto* high school graduation requirements, but these criteria are defined mostly at the level of time spent and credits accumulated, and not at the level of curricular content. If we are to make some headway in reducing the fragmentation of our liberal arts curriculum, we must begin by trying to escape the boundaries of our individual classrooms and institutions and explore the connection we have with others who teach this population.

We would begin, of course, by listening to each other and gathering information before we prescribe solutions. What, for instance, are the goals and content of high school English classes? How might community and four-year colleges connect with and extend the high school curriculum? Assuming that the "high tech" society is here to stay, that it is not ignoble for students to want to work after college, and that access to higher education is no longer the privilege of only upper and middle class students (assumptions that themselves might be debated), what modifications might be made in the way we look at the content of general education?

We must collectively be aware that we are creating a curriculum rather than simply teaching individual courses. It will not be easy to create a holistic definition of cultural literacy and at the same time maintain the pluralistic vision of American society that is part of our national heritage. It will not be easy, but it might be possible. However, that difficult possibility will occur only if we are able to reach beyond our own personal and institutional limitations and begin the dialogue with others about what we ought to teach and how we ought to teach it.

We must commit ourselves to a contemporary definition of general education, one which connects past and present, one which gives our students

both the information and the skills they need to be successful in modern society. And we must begin shaping that definition by inviting our colleagues from high schools and two- and four-year colleges to consider their mutual interests and responsibilities. Very few students will major in English; we must not view this group as the prime focus of our college curriculum. Instead we must define the common intellectual training that all higher education students should receive in our departments, and give much more time and energy to understanding the centrality of our role in general education.

REPORTS

Value, Freedom, and Transformation: Some Reflections on the Teaching of Philosophy at LaGuardia Community College

Neil Rossman

The question of the place of value in the teaching of philosophy, and other disciplines, is crucial. But the topic is complex and confusing, for talk about value can involve reference to what is valuable as well as to what is valued, and these need not be the same: one may not value what is valuable, or value what is not valuable, or both.

Ideally, of course, one wishes students (and others) to value what is valuable; and so the question becomes how to encourage this outcome. The appropriate method involves, I think, initially engaging students at the level of their values. Not only does this procedure make possible the evaluation of values and so their creative (free) selection, it also provides a more explicit awareness of the determinants of action — for it is values which are a main source of behavior.

But even here the situation is complex and not as straightforward as it might seem, for values are often held unconsciously or, more simply, implicitly. This is true not only of our deepest values, those which determine how we see and live our lives at the most basic levels, but also of those values which get us through our everyday routines. Beyond this is the disquieting thought that people typically do not think through their values in a critical fashion and so, in a significant sense, are not holding or acting on *their* values. Most often, one's values are simply the reflection of various external influences, passively and unthinkingly accepted. Further, when people finally do start to think about values, they often do so in a context of superficial subjectivisms and relativisms

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which lead to claims such as "Whatever I feel is of value is" and "Whatever I or my group believes is of value is."

Thus, the importance and obscurity of these matters combine to create a situation of near paralyzing chaos. Unfortunately, however, the paralysis does not inhibit violent, irrational, or destructive behavior, but only the behavior that would be careful and critical reflection upon, and choice of, value. Somehow this situation must be turned around. But it is idle to think this can be achieved merely by humanists and social scientists teaching their courses properly and doing their research constructively. This is no reason to despair, however, or to cease our best efforts; it is only to face, in a realistic fashion, the depth and difficulty of the problem.

In this context, I would like to present the form and content of the philosophy program at F. H. LaGuardia Community College, where over the last eleven years I have created and administered the program. Value and value awareness are central dimensions of the program. Broadly and fundamentally, the program recognizes the value of activity (as opposed to passivity). More specifically, the activities valued include the development of self-awareness (an aspect of freedom), the recognition of confusion and alienation (most deeply, from one's own creative energy or resources), and, to whatever degree possible, the overcoming of alienation and so the emergence of clarity and integration. The route to the achievement of these values involves the students becoming aware of their values: the ones they explicitly hold as well as those they implicitly hold and are logically committed to, given what they say and do. As students become more aware of these elements, they simultaneously become more aware of how they see, experience, and act in the world. This awareness provides a focal point and so a lever for possible transformation; for now the students can begin to assess the values which previously, often nonconsciously, were determining who they were and how they saw the world. In turn, this provides the possibility for selecting values and, indeed, for creating value. By valuing one is placing oneself in relationship to what is. When this is done rationally, it creates meaning and connection; when done irrationally, it creates non-sense and disconnection.

Within this situation, philosophy has a privileged position, for its analytic tools can be employed on any content at any level. One is not limited to teaching the philosophers of the past — or present — or to exploring some fixed set of problems. Rather, one can see philosophy as the activity or process of critical reflection, capable of examining any aspect of experience, while always maintaining the integrity, rigor, and systematic nature of the enterprise. In conducting these explorations of experience, one will, of course, encounter philosophers of the past — and present — as well as certain recurring and crucial problems. But when this occurs these elements will be serving the

particular explorations engaged in rather than controlling in a seemingly arbitrary fashion the activity itself.

Very generally, I see philosophy as the exploration of life experience by means of what I call "life concepts." These include "freedom," "morality," "sociality," "being religious," and "love." Such concepts have two dimensions: a more or less purely abstract, conceptual dimension; and a concrete, experiential dimension. The latter is revealed as the concept is applied to that aspect of experience identified by the concept. Thus, analyzing a concept forces one simultaneously to analyze and so become aware of the experiential dimension of the concept. For it is this dimension of the analysis that provides the content of the concept. Given these claims, philosophical analysis must deal not only with intellectual but also with affective elements. Feeling, emotion, imagination, fantasy — all of these are part of our "inner" lives, and as we explore life experience, these elements must be looked at, grasped, and perhaps modified or altered.

Here is where the "teaching" of values becomes prominent and exceedingly difficult. For while it is easy, and perhaps somewhat comforting, to think that the holding of values is a purely or essentially intellectual matter, this is far from the case. As suggested, most often our values are held non-reflectively, simply taken over from external sources. Yet, typically, people hold to their purported values with a tenacity that is quite remarkable. Since these values have often not been critically chosen, the tenacity does not flow from intellectual conviction, but rather from emotional need. And I say this not only with regard to those who have blindly and unthinkingly taken on certain values, but also, though perhaps to a somewhat lesser degree, with regard to some of us who evaluate and re-evaluate our values.

Given this analysis, our values are the royal road to an understanding of ourselves and how we see the world. Finding out how we have come to hold these values and what they mean to us reveals much about the sorts of persons we are — and these realizations can produce various sorts of shocks. The careful opening up of values, so that students can come to acknowledge what these are and begin to reflect upon and evaluate them, is perhaps the centerpiece of philosophical analysis conceived as the exploration of life experience. And so conceived, it involves the possibility of transformation.

I just mentioned that value analysis must be conducted carefully. What I have in mind is an indirect approach. Rather than calling for a direct statement and evaluation of values, it is more effective to raise particular problems and see what the students say in response. What is said will reveal what values are held explicitly and implicitly. If the student has not critically thought through his values, the explicit or stated values will be what he has taken over from others,

what he thinks he should value, or some variation or combination of these. The implicit values will be those the student is committed to, given his explicit values. Now, if the student has difficulty with his implicit values, this may direct his attention back to the explicit values and reveal to him that they are not truly his. This may, in turn, set him on the path of choosing or creating both his explicit and implicit values, always within the constraints of logic and coherence. This procedure, when successful, helps to release the student's critical and creative energy.

These explorations into experience and value can focus on any aspect of lived experience: individual freedom, morality, collective life, religion, and love. But one of the most difficult aspects of employing this method is getting students to recognize it *as* a method — a slow, patient, systematic analysis of a dimension of experience, as opposed to an attempt to get the "right answer." Given this, I think students need an introductory course which carefully and purposefully exposes them to the method or process. With that background, they then can go on to more advanced courses which will be deeper probes into experience.

The philosophy program at LaGuardia recognizes this need. The entry level course, "Introduction to Philosophy: Freedom and Human Action," seeks to involve students in the activity of philosophical analysis, to have them "do philosophy." The surface of concern is language, human nature, and freedom. But of all the underlying concerns, one of the most important and immediate is that philosophical analysis and exploration cannot proceed if one is unwilling to explore one's beliefs and values. If either consciously or unconsciously one is clinging to beliefs and values that have not been thought through, the explorations are cut off.

Our treatment of language emphasizes its constitutive function in how we construct experience and so the need to be clear on how language in general, and words in particular, function. Faulty assumptions about language lead to distorted beliefs and, finally, to chaotic experience. Thus such surface features of language as ambiguity, vagueness, and emotive meaning are discussed in the entry-level course. This enables students to reflect more adequately both on how they are using their terms and on the coherence and reasonableness of their beliefs and values.

We then turn to the topic of human nature and try to show how beliefs about human nature can rule out certain possibilities of action. When we see human nature as fixed and unchangeable, we cannot entertain the possibility of alternative action. Elements of this argument are developed more subtly in our treatment of freedom, in the contention that engaging in the process of critical reflection is an aspect of freedom. That is, the ability to reflect upon and evaluate one's beliefs and values is seen as a significant dimension of freedom, while the

inability to do so is seen as a lack of freedom. This emphasis encourages self confrontation on the part of students. They must become self aware enough to see what they are willing and unwilling to do and *why* they have the attitudes they do. Students need, that is, to focus on what is important to them and why it is so. This is clearly a value question — at this level involving only a description or statement of what values one holds. But it is also a value question at a deeper level, for the suggestion is made that it is indeed important, i.e., of value, to reflect upon and assess one's beliefs and values; and so the student needs to confront the more difficult normative question as well. Those students who affirm the value of the activity and choose to proceed with philosophic analysis have found one way to begin or, perhaps, accelerate the slow process of growth or self-transformation.

I think such an introductory experience is necessary as a first step into anything resembling meaningful analysis of life experience. The experience provides students not only with the rudiments of the skill of focused self-awareness, but also with some of the conceptual skills which are needed as philosophical analysis proceeds and deepens. Given the propaganda, manipulation, and intellectual and emotional confusion that pervade the culture, most students cannot simply ease into the sorts of analyses that occur in well-functioning philosophy classes.

The lessons of "Introduction to Philosophy" are extended and deepened in the program's advanced courses. Each of these focuses on a dimension of lived experience and attempts to open up for examination and evaluation the relevant beliefs, attitudes, and values held by the student. In "Ethics," the students explore systematically how they see and treat others. The question, "Why be moral?", is the topic of the course paper, and treating this matter enables students to confront directly their relationship to the "moral institutions of life." "Philosophy of Religion" focuses on the distinction between "having a religion" and "being religious" and invites the students to reflect on the meaning and values of being religious. In "Social and Political Philosophy," students are asked to explore their simultaneous existence as individuals and collective beings, and to reflect on the value of collective or social life. Finally, in "Philosophy of Love and Sexuallity," students examine the concept and experience of love and the relationship of the experience to sexuality.[1]

These brief summaries give a sense of how each course plunges the student into an aspect of experience at a reasonably profound level. The analyses enable students' beliefs, attitudes, and values to come to the surface so they may be evaluated. This procedure involves two explicit and distinct steps, steps which may be obscured if the ambiguity of "discovering human values" — language we often hear in educational circles — is not made explicit One sense of "discover" involves the finding of what is already there, what already exists. In this sense, we

talk about students discovering the values which they already hold, explicitly or implicitly. But there is another, and in this context more significant, sense of "discover." This involves, not finding what already exists, but rather creating something new. Here, by penetrating to the depths of human existence, the humanities enable the individual — students and teacher alike — to confront the human situation in both its unique and its universal aspects and so to fashion one's unique response. But this, of course, is no easy task, for in so fashioning a response, one must understand the role of one's own creative energy and clarify one's perception of the world. The contemporary barriers to such an accomplishment are numerous. Various forms of irrationalism, skepticism, and relativism combine to produce and express deepseated alienation. These phenomena must be confronted and their deeper challenges faced, understood, and, where possible, transcended.

That there are legitimate challenges here is certain, for with the understanding of history (or change) as inherent to humanity comes the disturbing question of the foundations of human understanding and knowledge. But asking the question is very different from assuming that surface or even non-surface differences make rational judgment impossible, either within a form of life or among forms of life individual or collective. That we are not clear about how to proceed at this level indicates the depth of the problem.

Notes

[1]For additional information about these courses, please contact the author.

Harmonizing the Humanities with Business Studies: The Language and International Trade Program at Eastern Michigan University

Ray Schaub

When most of my current colleagues and I began our careers in Eastern Michigan University's language department in the late 1960s and early 1970s, our traditional language program was thriving. In a program with some 200 language majors, enrollments of twenty were commonplace in senior and graduate level seminars in German romanticism, Don Quixote, and nineteenth-century Franch theater; and the great majority of our alumni were easily finding language teaching positions. Then disaster came. In an extreme example of a nationwide downturn in foreign language studies, by the mid-1970s we had lost 90 per cent of our majors. A special Goverr.or's commission on higher education in Michigan recommended that the language department at Eastern Michigan University be dissolved. But as is often the case, this severe crisis was also an opportunity to try out new ideas and strategies and to come up with solutions. The language department at EMU responded to the worst crisis in its history by successfully melding its own humanities discipline with business studies in a new program which it named "Language and International Trade" (L&IT). L&IT has now more than doubled the number of students who majored in language studies at EMU fifteen years ago during the heyday of our traditional language program.

The Language and International Trade Program at EMU

Michigan State Normal College was founded in 1849 as one of the first education colleges in the nation. Indeed, it had a primary role in defining American educational philosophy. The institution insisted, from early in its history, that a liberal arts education is essential in the development of the professional teacher. This concept is one of the school's most important legacies to the teaching profession. The centrality of the humanities curriculum was

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preserved as the institution grew into the multipurpose Eastern Michigan University. For example, *all* undergraduate students at EMU today must complete a 40 semester-hour segment of courses called "basic studies," and about three-fourths of this general education segment consists of humanities courses in language, literature, humanities-oriented social science, philosophy, religion, art, music, and drama. In addition, one-third of all courses — undergraduate and graduate — offered at EMU are in the humanities, and one-fourth of all students are majoring in a humanities curriculum.

In keeping with the University's mission to blend general and applied education, the department of foreign languages and bilingual studies introduced the L&IT program in 1978. The problem uppermost in our minds was the drastic decline in foreign language study throughout the U.S., which had begun in the late 1960s and continued unabated through the 1970s. The 1979 report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies phrased the problem most succinctly: "Americans' incompetence in foreign languages is nothing short of scandalous, and it is becoming worse." The report's statistics showed that only 15% of American high school students were studying a foreign language; that only one out of 20 public high school students took French, German, or Russian beyond the second year; and that only 8% of American colleges and universities required a foreign language for admission. (*A Report to the President from the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979, pp. 5-7.)

In designing L&IT, it was our specific purpose to demonstrate the relevance of foreign language and culture study for a new professional application area —international business — outside our discipline's traditional career field of teaching. We also perceived a coincidence of our own self-interests as language teachers with those of the nation: the United States desperately needs more Americans in international business with foreign language and area expertise, i.e., with sensitivity to human and cultural values. This need was also addressed very clearly by the President's Commission: "International trade has become more important to our economic well-being than ever before, but our trade performance has deteriorated ominously: America's trade deficit amounted to $28.5 billion in 1978. . . . While some obstacles to greater U.S. participation in international trade involve such factors as low rates of productivity growth and domestic inflation, it is the Commission's view that one serious barrier to American business is its lack of foreign language and area expertise" (*A Report to the President*, pp. 125-126).

The Curriculum

In response to this need, the department of foreign languages and bilingual studies developed the interdisciplinary B.A. and M.A. curricula in L&IT with the

close cooperation of colleagues in the departments of economics, history, geography, political science, and in the college of business. L&IT is directed by the department of foreign languages and bilingual studies; all students majoring in L&IT are considered foreign language majors. At the undergraduate level the major consists of 90 semester hours (counting all required and prerequisite courses), roughly two-thirds of which are in the liberal arts (language, cultural and humanities-oriented social science courses) and one-third in business studies. Our 30 semester-hour M.A. program is essentially a combination in equal parts of language and humanities-oriented social science courses on the one hand and business courses on the other.

The backbone of our new degree programs in the foreign language department consists of four advanced business language courses in each language (French, German, and Spanish) at the junior and senior levels and two at the graduate level. Undergraduate students must complete the first two years of basic language instruction in order to reach the business language courses; graduate students must have graduate-level language competency in order to enter the program.

As far as we know, ours is the largest concentration of business language courses among American colleges and universities, with several hundred undergraduate and graduate majors enrolled, 20 business language courses offered, and a staff of twelve professors who have previously taught or are currently teaching business language courses. In these courses we teach the culture (e.g., salient aspects of intellectual, social and political life and history, linguistic norms) of the foreign country, emphasize business vocabulary and communications, and compare the economy, business structure and practices, and business legal systems of the foreign country with those of the U.S. All topics are taught in the foreign language. We place primary emphasis on the acquisition of language and cultural skills and knowledge, and give secondary emphasis to business concept building, which is the main responsibility of our colleagues in the college of business.

Thus our L&IT program, while being carefully designed for a professional career application, is at the same time strongly oriented toward the humanities. This aspect of the program has won the praise of many of our colleagues, including Richard Brod, Director of the Foreign Language Division of the Modern Language Association. In the fall of 1982, we invited him to campus to evaluate specifically the curricular composition of L&IT. The following statement is quoted from his report:

> I am particularly impressed with the quality of teaching in the department and with the way in which the Language and International Trade Program grows organically out of the basic course in

language and culture. Your program has succeeded in harmonizing the traditional humanistic aspects of the study of language and culture with preparation for a business career. Clearly it does not diminish or distort the study of business to say that in its psychological and social aspects it is part of the study of culture. You and your colleagues have obviously perceived this truth and have been guided by it in developing the program and the individual courses which comprise it. At the same time, the department's careful planning and organization of the elementary and intermediate courses in language and culture attest to your recognition of the importance of building the business program upon a solid foundation in language competence.

Approaching the program from the perspective of the MLA and the traditional values of our field, I have no difficulty in accepting and commending EMU's program in Language and International Trade on its own terms as a sensibly conceived and solidly developed course of study with *humanities* contents. . . . I am impressed by your students' demonstrated competence, by their success in passing the various national certificate examinations, and by the achievements of those who have qualified for internships. In any case, it is clear that you and your colleagues have developed these aspects of the program with the same care and wisdom that you have given to the traditional aspects, and it is equally clear that the blend has been successful.

International Internship Exchange Program

Professional training is also a basic component of L&IT. We require for both the B.A. and M.A. degrees one full-time domestic or foreign internship of at least four months' duration in one or more business administration areas. The rationale is this: In these assignments our students can test and apply their theoretical knowledge in an actual working environment before they leave the university, and thus become better prepared to enter their professional career areas.

Going one step further, we have applied professional training to the specific context of L&IT by developing our International Internship Exchange Program, through which we can send our advanced students to full-time training assignments in Germany, France, and Spain. Since 1979 we have exchanged roughly 130 students with the professional universities of Konstanz, Muenster, and Nuertingen, and with the Carl Duisberg Society in Germany; with the Graduate Business School of Paris, Rouen, Lyon, and the Center for Instruction and Research in Management near Nice in France; and with Complutense

University in Madrid, Spain. In 1985 we plan to include other institutions in all three countries. So far, approximately one in eight of our students in L&IT has participated in the exchange program. We expect this ratio to rise soon to one in four or five, as more of our students approach the conclusion of their studies.

While on assignment our students work full-time in salaried business administrative professional training positions, and also have access, at the option of the student, to the instructional program of the sponsoring foreign business school. We have obtained very positive results in the five years that the exchange has been in existence: first because our students have been highly qualified and motivated; and second because this kind of intensive total immersion, hands-on learning experience is ideal for language training, for developing cultural skills and knowledge, and for broadening professional competence in exactly that international business career area which the student has chosen. For our L&IT students it is a humanizing experience sans pareil.

We require that students have advanced competencies in order to participate in the exchange program. Foreign training assignments are uniquely demanding, and the students must to every degree possible be equal to these demands. To qualify for an exchange placement, students must: demonstrate advanced foreign language proficiency and have at least basic knowledge of the foreign culture and the business language; have completed basic instruction in macro- and micro-economics and at least a minor or its equivalent in business studies; have completed at least a year's residency in EMU's department of foreign languages or in a consortial department; have had at least six months' work experience in an actual business setting; and demonstrate a high level of personal responsibility and maturity. In anticipation of applying for an exchange assignment toward the end of their studies, our students are typically strongly motivated to concentrate on developing their functional competencies from the outset.

Our program has several clear advantages as an exchange program. First of all, we tie in directly to the internship programs already in place at our partner schools, thereby significantly reducing our own program costs which are limited primarily to placing foreign exchange students in U.S. firms. Second, our students are not confronted by the typical immigration and employment problems faced by students who want to work abroad, because they are officially enrolled at the sponsoring foreign school as students, not as regular employees in the labor force. And last, we are able to use the foreign exchange students who come to EMU as native informants in language and cultural matters in our own instructional program.

The firms which have participated in our program include Ford, General Motors, Bechtel, Gould, Touche Ross, and American Motors in the U.S.;

Hewlett Packard, Mercedes Benz, Bosch, Ford, Volkswagen, and Siemens in Germany; Renault, General Moters, ELF, and the Société Générale de Surveillance in France; the Foreign Trade Bank and the Unesa Electric Corporation in Madrid. Other internships have been arranged with banks, public acccunting firms, wholesale and retail firms, a management consulting company, high technology and technology transfer firms, and an electric utility company. In these firms our students have worked in the areas of accounting, finance, data processing, computer programming, internal and external auditing, marketing, import-export, personnel, production planning and analysis, administrative services, business planning, and sales. While our students pay all travel costs themselves as well as an exchange program fee to EMU, overall costs are relatively low, because we stipulate that all employers must provide internship salaries at least adequate to pay normal living expenses throughout the student's work assignment. And so far we have been able to arrange salaries somewhat higher than basic living costs with most employers.

Because student enrollment in our advanced classes at EMU can vary significantly and unexpectedly from term to term, while student participation in the exchange must nevertheless be kept relatively stable, we have set up a consortial linking arrangement — called the "Exchange Consortium" — with language departments at other U.S. colleges and universities in order to increase the pool of qualified students for the exchange program. German departments at M.I.T. and Rutgers were the first to join our program. In the meantime we have included other language departments at the universities of Rhode Island and Florida, Tufts, Purdue, Nazareth College (New York), New York University, California State University at Fullerton, High Point College (North Carolina), and Georgia State University. We plan to extend the program to other colleges and universities in the near future. As part of our working agreement, our consortial partners will provide to us job development contacts for placing some of the incoming foreign exchange students in their own areas. This will allow us to extend our geographic base of placement outside Michigan.

In addition to regular students, our International Exchange Program can accommodate language teachers and business professionals. In the summer of 1982 we sent one of our colleagues in German at EMU to a four-month assignment in the international department of a bank in Stuttgart. Because the results were very positive, we now plan to include U.S. foreign language teachers in the exchange program on a regular basis. In doing so we will contribute much to our colleagues' knowledge of the business language and the cultural and professional environment of the foreign country and thus help increase their competence to teach business language.

Similarly, we hope to exchange between U.S. and foreign firms business professionals who want to work and study in the foreign country to develop their

international business expertise. This new application of the exchange program will establish a close and mutually beneficial working relationship between us and the participating firms, and will allow us to improve our instructional program at EMU by using both the visiting and returning professionals as resource personnel in business language courses.

Program Financing

Development of our programs has been financed for the most part by external funds. Since 1978 roughly $500,000 in outside grants has been obtained by the department of foreign languages and bilingual studies for program planning and implementation. This amount exceeds the level of internal funding by at least four to one.

The first grant came from the Department of Education (Title VI) for 1977-1979 and allowed us to plan and initiate the B.A. and M.A. in Language and International Trade. The second came in 1980-1981 from the Government of West Germany for the purpose of designing and setting up the Exchange Consortium. It was a relatively small grant to cover travel, workshop and conference expenses, but at a time when our departmental budget for such activities had plummeted to practically nothing, the German grant was crucial. In 1981 we obtained our third and largest grant, a three-year funding subsidy from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. The FIPSE demonstration grant provides to the director of Language and International Trade released time to administer the International Exchange Program and Consortium, secretarial assistance, consultant, travel and program maintenance expenses, and has allowed us to bring the exchange program to full implementation.

Our most recent grants have come from the Exxon Education Foundation and again from Title VI. For the 1983-1984 year Exxon has provided full funding for an assistant director of Language and International Trade, whose major responsibilities are to provide assistance in all aspects of program coordination, to develop specifically the Spanish component of our intern exchange program, and to direct our annual national conference on Languages for Business and the Professions. We received a second Exxon grant for 1984-1985 which has enabled us to employ a full-time secretary for L&IT (for the first time in the history of the program) and to cover all other ancillary costs. For 1983-1985 we have also received Title VI support to design and implement a new technical language component for L&IT in order to extend its relevance into the areas of engineering and technology. As did the first three, our last three grants from Exxon and Title VI came at crucial times and made it possible to sustain essential program operations and growth when adequate internal funding would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain.

Student Enrollment and Career Results

The student response to our L&IT program has been overwhelming. While the curriculum was initiated only in 1978 and fully implemented only three years ago, there are now 450-500 undergraduate and graduate students majoring in L&IT. This surge in enrollment has more than made up for the decline in the number of foreign language majors which occurred at EMU a decade ago. The main reason for the downturn was that teaching at the secondary level, which had been the traditional career field for the great majority of our students, was suddenly no longer accessible to our graduates. With our L&IT program we have succeeded in bringing students back to our department by demonstrating the value of language and cultural studies as a humanities discipline for the new professional application area of international business.

The first career placement results for our alumni are very encouraging. In October 1983, we mailed a comprehensive career questionnaire to the first 100 alumni. In the survey we asked questions in three main areas: general employment information, international employment information, and degree information. The response has been gratifying. Approximately two-thirds of those who have answered the survey so far have indicated that their work has international aspects. These placement results seem to contradict what we had been told by most company officials and business colleagues when we were designing the curriculum for L&IT — namely that most college graduates with international interests are first placed in domestic operations and transferred to international operations only after five or more years. Our experience thus far — albeit based on a relatively small group of alumni — is that the majority of our students are being placed soon after graduation by companies who recognize the value of their international skills. A plurality — though not the majority — of these positions are in marketing and sales. We have been pleased by the relatively wide variety of international positions our students have found.

A majority of the respondents to the survey — over 70 per cent, thus including some students in strictly domestic operations — have also indicated that they do use foreign language — primarily German, Spanish, and French —in their work, for a great number of purposes: reading technical documents, writing business reports, letters, memos, and technical documents, translating letters and documents, interpreting oral communications, handling telephone and telex communications, conversing with representatives of foreign organizations, and meeting socially with foreign visitors. It is quite a broad range. With respect to other questions pertaining to international employment, our typical student now working in the international area is with a firm which operates or controls a factory or an office in a foreign country, has more than one thousand employees outside the U.S., and deals mainly in export or import. The most frequently mentioned countries or regions with which our students' firms do

business are, in descending order: Germany; France; Spain, South America, and Japan; Mexico and the United Kingdom; Taiwan; Africa; Korea; and China.

From the answers to the general employment section of the survey we have learned that approximately 95 per cent of our students are currently employed, which is high given the recent severe recession; however, 10 per cent of them experienced a delay of several months between graduation and finding employment. Typically, they are earning salaries in the upper teens to the lower twenty-thousand-dollar range within a year after starting their jobs.

In asking our students for degree information on the survey, we asked them to rate their foreign language and cultural training, business studies, and practical training as factors in their finding employment. Interestingly, they have given all three factors essentially equal importance, a response which seems to verify our basic assumption that an interdisciplinary curriculum combining languages and other humanities disciplines with studies in the applied professional field effectively fits the needs of most students who want to work in international business.

Conclusion

Both for us and for our students the Language and International Trade program has been a conspicuously successful curricular innovation. The basic key to this success is that L&IT is a harmonious marriage of humanities and applied professional disciplines, in which both areas of expertise are vitally needed to respond to a clear national problem: the lack of Americans competent to work in international business.

Can L&IT be replicated elsewhere? We feel strongly that it can and should be replicated, in whole or in part. While there is certainly no blueprint to be followed in developing such a program, we see three aspects which are crucial for the endeavor. First of all, there must be active consensus among the respective academic departments that this kind of applied interdisciplinary innovation is appropriate and should be undertaken. Second, adequate amounts of faculty released time (or other kinds of administrative assistance) have to be provided by the administration of the institution or by external grant sources for the purposes of planning, implementing, and coordinating the new program. And third, networking is essential — networking with other academic institutions for the purpose of sharing expertise and material resources, and networking with the business community in order to provide experiential learning opportunities to students and to establish connections between teachers and practitioners in the field.

Based on our experience at EMU, we can only encourage our colleagues at other institutions to develop their own interdisciplinary curricula similar to

L&IT. Such programs have great potential for enhancing the value of humanities and business studies and for developing our students' competence to work in the global economy.

Rethinking the Introductory History Course

David Berry and Steve Curry

For the past fifteen years there has been increasing discontent in the history profession about the status of the introductory history course, especially the western civilization course, and its role in the curriculum of colleges and universities. During this period several major criticisms of the foundation course have been made in terms both of its content and its educational value. In addition, student enrollments in the traditional western civilization course have plummeted. While there are institutional and political reasons for this, we believe the nature of the course as well as changes in the discipline have contributed significantly to the decline.

The traditional course was founded in the perceived unity of the western experience and as part of the general education movement following World War I. Post World War II experience has called into question the basic values upon which the course was based. The rise of politically independent non-western nations raised the question of the appropriateness of a narrowly conceived "western" course, while reactions to World War II undermined the notions of the moral superiority of the west on which the course was originally based. In recent years, general education, and hence the history requirement, has also fallen under the cloud of increasingly specialized programs designed to prepare students for jobs or careers.

The guiding assumption of the movement for general education held that there was a body of knowledge all educated people should command. The "Contemporary Civilization and Humanities" courses at Columbia College and the proliferation of western civilization courses across the country following World War I reflected the concern for "covering" the broad spectrum of knowledge and providing the students with a general introduction to western history and cultural values. The so-called "knowledge explosion" of the 20th century, however, has reduced every discipline into an array of sub-specialties.

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This trend is especially observable in the study of history where whole new areas have been linked with the more traditional activities of the profession.

Developments within the history profession have also contributed to the decline of the traditional western civilization course. Historians have moved in several directions to broaden the scope of historical studies. New models of historical research have emerged in social, economic, political, and intellectual history. The Rankean history of politics and elites has been supplemented by new subject matter and new methodologies. However, while the nature of the historical enterprise has broadened, textbooks used in introductory courses rarely have been able to deal adequately with the new directions and methods. Moreover, as the field has become more complex, teachers of history have found that they now have more "material" to deal with and, consequently, find it difficult to provide adequate coverage, a coherent narrative, or a sense of what the study of history entails.

The other important issue for historians and other educators is the place of the western civilization course in the college curriculum. In the not too distant past, many colleges required the course of all students, and the course was listed as a prerequisite for all advanced work in history. The course was required and the classrooms were full. The decline in college history enrollments over the last decade can be seen as part of the larger crumbling of general education. The corresponding examination of the purpose and efficacy of the introductory history course has raised major issues within the history profession. Gilbert Allardyce, for example, has skillfully demonstrated how the consensus which made the introductory history course central to the college curriculum unraveled in the 1960s and led to the subsequent decline of enrollments and, in many instances, to the abandonment of history as a required component of the college curriculum.[1]

More recently, however, many colleges and universities have moved once again in the direction of requiring a general education distribution or core requirement. But the western civilization course as it is currently taught is rarely consistent with the goals established by general education curricula. The new general education movement is a serious attempt to create a well-educated person who can comprehend the world he or she lives in and who can understand a variety of ways of knowing. History as a way of knowing is an essential part of this larger agenda. History instruction must move from "coverage" to the development of analytic thought and methodological understanding. A person can no longer be expected to be familiar with all of "history." It is reasonable, however, to suppose that an educated person can understand the nature of historical inquiry, the nature of historical sources, the techniques of historical analysis, and the need for historical perspective.

When we look at the actual practice of teaching the western civilization course at two- and four-year colleges, we find that coverage is still the major goal of the course. Sample college syllabi show that the primary concern of the course is still to "introduce" students to most aspects of western history from the dawn of civilization to the Fifth Republic. The course is usually tied to one of the major textbooks on the market and the focus is primarily political and intellectual development. In virtually every syllabus, 5000 years of human activity are squeezed into a twenty-eight week "learning experience."

Many in the profession are troubled with this approach. The American Historical Association's teaching division has tried to make the profession aware of some of the problems connected with the course and with possible alternatives. The Annapolis Conference on the Introductory Course — sponsored by the American Historical Association in the fall of 1980 — was a serious effort in this direction. The conference brought together historians from every sort of institution of higher education. In the end they agreed that efforts must be made to close the gap between the state of historical understanding and the typical survey course which introduces students to history. Warren Susman, reporting on the conference, has implored members of the history profession to integrate effective scholarship and effective teaching, to formulate a new consensus which will reestablish the introductory course as an appropriate foundation to historical studies.[2]

The assertion by Susman, however, requires that we incorporate recent scholarship into the structure and content of the introductory course. In terms of content, historical studies have grown enormously in recent decades. In social history the profession has moved beyond looking at social groups and social stratification to issues such as aging, gender, family, work, and the texture of everyday life. Cultural history has added several new sub-disciplines, including the examination of popular culture and mentalities, to the more traditional concerns of intellectual history. Political history has added local studies and a variety of statistical methods to the traditional studies of political elites and high politics. Everywhere we look bold and innovative historians are breaking new ground and reworking traditional areas.

It is hard to imagine how all of these new concerns can be addressed in the typical civilization course. Just to add the new data with which historians work would require hundreds of additional pages of text. But even if the "factual" material were added, this would not make sense to students because the new material requires careful analysis and explication. Simply pouring more "data" into the traditional course based on the coverage model will not suffice. To do justice to the nature of historical studies requires a different kind of introductory course and a different structure. In short, the survey course should be

abandoned. The course we advocate would introduce the nature of historical studies rather than trying to survey civilization from beginning to end.

The course that we believe should be taught as the first history course would focus on six to eight well-defined historical "moments." The word "moment" is used here in a flexible sense. It can mean focusing on something as short-lived as Weimar Germany, or as protracted as 17th century England, or as enduring as feudal Europe. The point, however, is that a "moment" be defined as a manageable historical unit that can be explored in some depth in about a four-week instructional period within a standard semester. The historical moments studied within this course would be looked at from a variety of points of view. Students would consider within each unit the important political, economic, and social structures of the historical moment as well as the relationship between these structures and intellectual developments. Within these topics students can also explore elements of stability and agents of change. Over a year-long course students would come into contact with several distinct societies and cultures. In the process they would learn methods of historical analysis and understanding that could then be applied to any historical period and any society.

The course designed this way will have several features that allow for flexibility within a variety of institutional settings. The first element of flexibility is that each instructor can choose which moments are most appropriate for inclusion in the particular course. Thus, the instruction can be tailored both to the teacher's strength of preparation in various fields and to the special interests of various student bodies. A second kind of flexibility involves non-western areas within the course. Most often the course will have a substantial western orientation; typical units are likely to include Ancient Athens, Imperial Rome, Renaissance Florence, 17th Century England, 18th Century France, Revolutionary Europe, and Victorian England. But in a world civilization course, moments such as Han China, the Rise of Islam, and Imperialism and the Emergence of Non-Western States can be easily incorporated. Ultimately the selection process is open to the initiative of each instructor or institution, but regardless of which moments are selected, the general education goal can be met and students can gain a substantial introduction to the nature of historical studies.

The organization of such a course need not be complex. A typical first semester course in western civilization could include four-week moments on Periclean Athens, Augustan Rome, Feudal Europe, and the Reformation in Geneva. In each case, the largest number of classes would be devoted to studies of carefully chosen and specific aspects of each of the moments. Historical problems can be explored in depth and a coherent narrative provided within each moment. Students can explore major social topics, such as the role of

women in ancient Athens, the experience of childhood in a noble household, or the nature and extent of slavery. Major intellectual and cultural topics can be examined, and there is time to explicate significant primary texts. The ideology of the Roman state can be examined, and the question of ideology, the interaction of ideas with politics and society, can be developed for feudal Europe and for Reformation Geneva. The nature and role of religion can be pursued in all four moments. In the end the student is provided with a coherent and substantial introduction to historical study and the discipline of history. To facilitate the transition from one moment to another, the instructor can provide "bridges" to issues that will be raised again in the study of other moments and introduce concepts and traditions that will shape the next moment. The bridge lecture is not designed to fill in the entire gaps between moments, but rather to provide linking information so that students can make the necessary transition to a new moment more smoothly.

The same approach can be applied to a world civilization course and to an American history course. Karen Whitman of Dundalk Community College (MD), for example, has developed a United States history course using this approach. For the first half of a year-long course she selected four moments which explore the formation of national identity and the problems of cultural homogeneity: the Salem witch trials, the Jefferson-Hamilton debates, Jacksonian America, and Black culture in pre-Civil War white society. Major topics are incorporated into these moments and in the bridge lectures, such as early immigration, the American Revolution, early industrialization, and growing sectionalism.

Just as the construction of a course syllabus can have enormous flexibility, so also can the particular moments be designed to meet a variety of educational settings. Recent historical scholarship has opened many classroom possibilities. Good examples are Calvin's Geneva and Han China. Geneva in the mid-16th century is an ideal topic for a western history course. So many of the themes of the Reformation flow together in this single center that students can see from this vantage point the reformation in its many dimensions. Geneva can be seen as the model reformed society, the source of a major intellectual movement, and the training ground for the leadership of an international revolution. These topics can be viewed in a number of ways. Students can look at the change in relations between church and state, the dynamics of an active exile community within the city, and how religious reform affects family life and the status of women. They understand how a single city can be seen at once as the guiding beacon for salvation and the home of the anti-Christ. The materials for teaching this moment are bountiful and easily accessible. Montor's *Calvin's Geneva* covers many aspects of the city's life in this period. Students can read Calvin on a variety of theological issues and get a clear sense of how theology can be

applied to a variety of practical situations by reading the letters of Calvin and Theodore Beza. This basic material can be supplemented with articles from recent scholarship on a variety of topics such as the role of women, the social impact of exiles upon their return home, and the international influence of Genevan theology.

In a world civilization course a consideration of Han China offers an excellent, focused introduction to Chinese history. The Han Dynasty provides a well-defined and "representative" slice of Chinese history which can be studied in depth. In this period the Confucian tradition triumphed, the main features of both peasant and "official" life were established. Major primary and secondary sources are available. A typical instructional pattern would begin by introducing the student to the structure of Han government and society: the Emperor, the peasants, slaves, artisans, and merchants. Both the political and social history of the period can be explored in depth. Topics for class discussion can include the nature of the agrarian economy and craft production, the family, the intimate connection between food production, famine and death, folk medicine and religious beliefs. Finally, the Confucian tradition can be studied. A major text, such as *The Analects*, can be examined in historical context and as it is transformed into the ideological centerpiece of the Middle Kingdom. We believe, in summary, that an introductory history course built on the principles underlying this discussion can achieve a number of important purposes. It can:

1. Provide an introduction to the nature of historical studies;

2. Provide an understanding of a few units or "moments" of the western/world/American experience which will serve as models of how historians explore the past and of the types of understanding that can be gained through the study of history;

3. Provide enough concentrated historical material on a few well-defined historical periods so that students can begin to do interpretive and synthetic historical thinking;

4. Provide an understanding of the historical contexts and meanings of great "texts" of different civilizations; and

5. Provide an appropriate historical component which can serve as part of an overall general education curriculum.

The advantages of the moment approach are numerous. The moment approach allows the instructor to incorporate recent scholarship into the introductory history course. The instructor can thus exemplify the discipline of history and the nature of the historian's craft. Also, faculty who use this approach are likely to bring to their introductory classes a new sense of enthusiasm. The advantages for students are even more varied. They learn to

master substantial "blocks" of subject matter, and, what is especially important, the content combines a coherent narrative with the depth of historical analysis. Students learn the skills of historical inquiry, the nature of evidence, the problems of explanation, and the rewards of historical understanding. Because each moment is studied in depth, students can confront both primary and secondary sources; they can learn to perform close textual analysis and they can do substantial writing. In this course students are introduced to history as it is widely understood today, and from such a course, they can go on to apply the principles of historical method and understanding in other areas of their education.

Notes

[1]Gilbert Allardyce, "The Rise and Fall of the Western Civilization Course," *American Historical Review*, 87 (June 1982), 695-725.

[2]Warren Susman, "Annapolis Conference on the Introductory Course," *Perspectives* (American Historical Association), November 1, 1982, 22.

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